CHICAGO VIA ABU DHABI

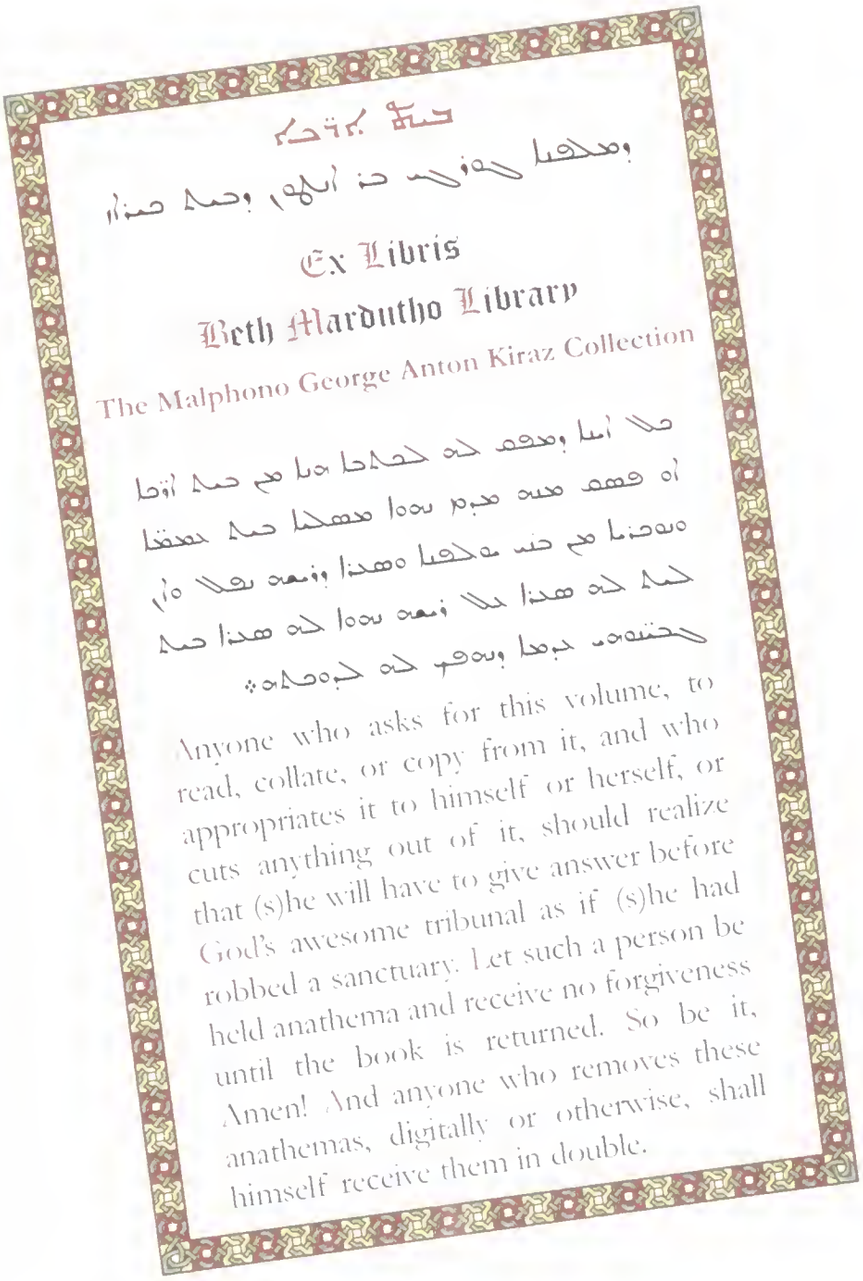
TRAVELOGUE

DR. MAR APREM

January 1967.Left to Right:Deacon Khono Shimon,Shamash
Sargis, Bishop Mar Dinkha,Benyamin from Iran,
Fr.George Mooken(Mar Aprem)

Ground breaking ceremony of Mar Mari Shleeha Church
in Yonkers,New York in January 1967 by Bishop Mar Dinkh

Chicago via Abu Dhabi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Chicago via Abu Dhabi

A travelogue of an Archbishop about his sudden trip to Chicago in February - March 2010

Mar Aprem Metropolitan

Trichur, Kerala

2010

Chicago via Abu Dhabi

English. A Travelogue

Author : Most. Rev. Dr. Mar Aprem,
Metropolitan Palace, Thrissur 680 001
Kerala, India
Phone 0091-487-2420978
E mail: aprem.mar@gmail.com

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Detailed Outline

Introduction. Pages 14 - 20

Sudden trip to USA. "business or pleasure". Deposits in Swiss Bank from citizens of the different nations. India $1451 billions. Mar Narsai E. De Baz. consecration of Mar Meelis Zaia as Metropolitan. Pro Oriente meeting in Annaya, Lebanon. Go in Peace (*Zil Bashlama*). REST IN PEACE "Till we meet again". Be careful of lotteries.

NUMBER: +44 8713152457 BMW PROMOTION,

Acknowledge, I am sorry to encroach into your privacy in this manner, I find it pleasurable to offer you my partnership in business. Regards, Roman Swierczynski, ul. Stanislawa Zaryna 2A, 02-593 Warszawa, Email: b.roman_5@yahoo.com.hk. Thanks to Mar Narsai Press. Leela Alex, writer of Foreword.

Chapter 1. To Chicago Pages 21 - 34

Ethihad Airlines, National Airline of UAE. Airpocket near Goa on decent to Cochin airport, Mr.Shashi Tharoor, Immigration in Chicago, Insulin at Abu Dhabi airport, Sanil Mooken, Funeral on Friday, Holy Qurbana, St.George Cathedral, procession to the cemetery, Sitting in the Patriarch's car, Walking in the cemetery, sub deacon with *pirma* (Censor) in the front. Young relatives of Mar Narsai carrying his photos and wreaths of flowers, Deacons in black suit carrying the red casket with the dead body of the dead Metropolitan. Bishops and Patriarch.

Sanil Mooken drove me to the St. George's Cathedral. Mar Meelis Zaia and Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis. My personal feeling. Bishop Mar Joseph Sargis. Jelu. Jilwaye.

Cathedral to cemetery. Deacon Nabeel Isaac, Khalil Gibran. In Lebanon Mar Aprem Athniel, Mar Gewargis Sliwa, Archbishop of Iraq went to Beirut for to receive condolences from the Metropolitans and civic leaders of Lebanon.

Bishop Ramzi R, Musallam. from New Millport, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. Dr. Francis Murad Ph.D. from Phoenix and many Assyrians from all parts of USA and Canada to attend the Funeral of Mar Narsai de Baz, "Mar Aprem, your friend Sabah has gone to Afghanistan to work".

Fr. Benjamin Benjamin. Mar Narsai Metropolitan of Kirkuk, Iraq. It was my privilege to ordain him as a priest on 26 September 1968 in Mar Zaia Cathedral in Karradat Maryam in Baghdad, Iraq. Rev. Archdeacon Awiqam Pithyon had come with Mar Narsai Metropolitan to participate in the funeral service. Bishop Emmanuel Eliyah. Mr. Zaya, son of Malik Yacob d Malik Ishmael.

Chapter 2 St. Andrews parish Pages 35-48

Deacon Adnan David. *Mahi Mahi.* St.Andrews Church has about twelve classrooms in the basement, used by the Sunday school, youth group, choir group etc.

I went to the Patriarchal Residence in Morton Grove the following week to record an interview conducted by our Media Committee. Fr. Antwan Latchin conducted the interview. A sub deacon was the camera man. Fr. Antwan is the head of the Media committee of our church in general. Eleanor Tomasula. Polly Reuling. Mrs. J.D. Mooken

The Vicar of the St. Andrews parish is sending lessons for Bible study by e mail to hundreds of people around the world every week.

1. Mar Gewargis Cathedral, H.H. Mar Dinkha IV Boulevard in Tuihi and 7201 Ashland Avenue, Chicago IL 60626.

2 Mar Sargis Church, former Cathedral of Late Catholicos Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun 1850 West Cuyler, Chicago, IL 60613

3 Mart Mariam, Roselle

550 Larsen Lane, Roselle, IL 60172

4. St.John Assyrian Church.

1421 West Lawrance, Chicago ,IL 60640

5. Mar Andrews Church. Glendale. IL 60025

Adnan David, Ezaria David was a friend of mine through Voice of the East magazine. St. Andrews Church has a good bookstore. Jews, Assyrians share Worship space. Other Assyrian Churches in Chicago. Assyrians have a history spanning over 6700 years. O'Hare International Airport. Accidents.

Chapter 3. Yonkers, New York. Pages 49-54

The Assyrian Church of Mar Mari Shleeha in Yonkers, New York. Fr. Gewargis Sulaiman

Dr.Dorothy Chacko. Catholicos Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun. Mr.Geevarghese Ematty, uncle of Fr. Santhosh of Trichur, Samuel Pananchery with his wife and daughter, Mrs Elsamma Inasu Nellangara with her three sons. Valsan Thermadom with his wife Shanthamma.Simon (Babu) Thermadom with his wife Anne, Geevarghese's two daughters Mini and Milini and two sons, Micky and wife Dr.Nisha as well as younger son Munna & Reshma with their sons Senna and Nikhil. Greenburgh in White Plains, New York

New York City in Broadway 120th street for my second Master's degree in Sacred Theology (STM degree) during 1966 -67. *News*

from 'The New Sunday Express, April 25, 2010.
Manhattan's frenzied streets and soaring skyscrapers.

Chapter 4. Return from Chicago Pages 55-60

On Tuesday March 2, 2010 I packed my bags, DVDs of the funeral of Mar Narsai Metropolitan.

Chor Bishop George Toma, Fr. Antwan Latchin came with the two DVDs , Mrs. Christina. Sanil Mooken, Fr. Klutz, O'HARE international Airport, Etihad airlines, Leela Alex in Orlando, Florida.

Nephew Chacko nicknamed Chicku, Dr. Asha, Sanil and his wife Maria, Business class waiting room in the airport.

Chapter 5. Seventh Visit to Sharjah Pages 61-76

April 2005 I celebrated Holy Qurbana in UAE Mart Mariam parish, Sajimon Nellissery, Pradeep Mooken, Mar Thoma Church in Jabal Ali, Fr. Lazar Madathampadi, Fr. P K. Raphael, Fr. Thomas Thermadom, Fr. E. V. Antony, Fr.Victor Kollanur, Fr.Jos Vengassery, Deacon Sachin, St.Philip's Chapel in St.Martin Anglican Church in church area, Sharjah, Dohuk, Fr. Joju Anto (now Bishop Mar Yohannan).

Mar Aprem celebrates Holy Qurbana in Emirates National School, Sharjah, Fr.Victor, Assistant Vicar Fr. Sachin, and Fr. Simon Emmatty assisted. Abu Dabi hotels. Election for Iraq in Dubai. NRIs can vote only if present in India. Blood Money in UAE. Sanjiv Mehta C.E.O. of the East India Company. Mr. Nimrud Baito Youkhanna. Archdeacon Emmanuel Youkhanna. The Eastern Province. (Saudi Arabia).

Foreword

The 70th book authored by Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan is a travelogue of his visit to Chicago, New York, Abu Dhabi & Sharjah in February - March 2010. The trip was of an ecclesiastical nature, assisting the Catholicos Patriarch, the Supreme Head of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East in the burial service of Mar Narsai de Baz, Metropolitan of Lebanon, Syria and Europe. The burial service was in the Assyrian Cathedral of St. George (Mar Gewargis) in Chicago.

The author has written 27 travelogues during the past three decades. Through these travelogues Mar Aprem has written a great deal about different countries of the world such as Australia, USA, England, Russia, Brazil, and Europe. He has visited the U.S. more than twenty times. His observation of historic events as well as present situations about several nations and churches are informative and enjoyable. These books supplement information which readers do not get from textbooks in Church History etc.

Paramakkil Thoma Kathanar wrote the first travelogue in the Malayalam language before the end of the18th century. It was called *Varthmanapusthakam*. It was the narration of his journey to Portugal and Rome to get his companion Dr. Joseph Kariatil Malpan to be consecrated Bishop for the Indian Syrian Christians. This Malayalam travelogue has been translated into English in Rome. The Saint of Parumala, Mar Gregorius, wrote a travelogue in Malayalam called *Oruslim yatra,* about his pilgrimage to Jerusalem etc. in 1895 AD. Mar Aprem also wrote a travelogue in Malayalam about his journey to Jerusalem and Rome in 1985, for which late Cardinal Joseph Parekkatil of Cochin wrote the foreword.

Many eminent men like Prof. Sukumar Azhikode, Metropolitan Philipose Mar Chrysostem, Vice Chancellors, Ambassadors, officials belonging to IAS and IPS have written the Foreword to the books of Mar Aprem in the past.

I know Mar Aprem well. I am four years older than him. I am the second and he is the fourth in our family of ten siblings. Since his nursery school days he has been a brilliant student. We all noticed his leadership qualities since his school days. I have been living with my husband in the United States for the past 46 years. Yet I tried to keep in contact with him whenever he visited the States. The author is not only a spiritual head of an ancient Christian community based in Thrissur, but also a speaker in several secular and sacred gatherings in Kerala and abroad.

His comments on both religious and secular matters are very insightful and appropriate. He quotes from the current newspapers and comment on them. Many of us are concerned about the security of Indians going abroad for studies or employment. It is undoubtedly an attractive place for students and job seekers. At the same time what about the security? The author does not pronounce the last word on certain issues. Still he draws our attention to these issues and events in an engaging manner.

The readers get a lot of fascinating information from this book about the early history of many nations he has visited. The information on Assyrians is also very relevant. Some of them are political refugees from Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Lebanon. The author knows the Assyrian community quite well. He had visited Iraq in 1962 during the regime of Abdul Karim Kassim. He was made bishop and later archbishop in Baghdad in September 1968 during the presidency of Al Bekr. He had visited the Assyrians in Iraq when Saddam Hussein was Vice President and later President in Iraq.

Through e-mails Mar Aprem keeps in touch with a large circle of friends globally. He researches the internet for more information and to be kept updated on many matters. Due to his busy schedule, he does not get time to go to a Public Library and read more books. But the internet helps him to some extent. I do not know whether he spends more time on writing than reading. He says that he has written 70 books and it is impossible for him to remember even the titles of his own books. Now he says, "I am a perfect 70. I have written 70 books and my age is 70 and my weight is now reduced to 70 Kilograms." In that way it is easy to remember. Although people say that he has a perfect memory he has begun to realize that he lost that claim as he comes close to completing 70 years of age.

The Assyrians love Mar Aprem. He narrates the history of their forefathers and they appreciate his efforts on behalf of the Church very much. He tells of many events that reflect the life and times of the Assyrian community through the dozens of travelogues he has written. He has stayed in many Assyrian homes either with priests or with lay people. During his travels he keeps himself busy visiting Assyrian and Indian families.

In some of his earlier trips he used to carry a laptop and type some of the details, before he forgets them. But in this trip he did not carry his laptop. In a previous trip to Chicago during the security check he forgot to take out his laptop from his handbag. When his handbag was screened the security officials noticed the laptop inside and the security man was exasperated with him. He immediately took the laptop out of the hand luggage and sent it separately through the scanning machine. The officer was still suspicious. He opened the computer with extra precaution as if a bomb was hidden in it.

Mar Aprem has narrated many small but interesting incidents in his travels. A professor of a European university writing a foreword to one of his earlier travelogues **Two Trips in 2002** observed. "In fact I admire him for many qualities of his, but perhaps

most for this gentle, candid, humorous and childlike gaze with which he sees the world, while still understanding its profound structures."

Reading through his many sided travelogues I am reminded of the **Inside** series of John Gunther. Among Indian writers I am reminded of Khushwant Singh of New Delhi. He writes humour books as well as travelogues. In Khushwant Singh's books one can smell foreign liquor. In that respect Mar Aprem is entirely different.

One who begins to read this travelogue will stick with it till the last page of this book. There are some clear colour photographs in the last 16 pages of this work. A detailed outline given at the beginning of this book provides the readers a glance at the contents of this tiny book.

A list of the 56 foreign trips made by Mar Aprem was appended in the Appendix of his last book on Australia. Looking at the list one gets the impression that the author is winding up. He may not renew his ten-year visa to USA. Other friends of the author remark that Mar Aprem will change his mind soon and continue his journeys abroad as well as writing them for the benefit of larger public.

I wish wide readership for this book. As the book was about to be penned, the P. Thomas foundation had announced it's Award for the year 2009 to Dr. Mar Aprem, recognizing his literary and cultural contributions. The celebrated Indo-Anglian writer from Thrissur, the late P. Thomas, had written the **foreword** to the third book of humour **Laugh To Health** penned by Mar Aprem and published by Christian Literature Society, Madras in 1992. That book like many of his books is out of print.

Orlando, Florida, USA — Mrs. Leela Alex M.A.

Introduction

Many Indians often travel abroad. Some travel on business and others go for pleasure. When the immigration authorities ask the question "business or pleasure" in the landing card, I did not want to tick business, as I am not a businessman. Perhaps I can be classified as a businessman in the business of the souls of the people, wholesale or retail. The other choice was pleasure. I could not tick there, as I was going to attend the funeral of an Archbishop a beloved friend. It is not at all a pleasure trip.

India is not a poor country. It was rich and prosperous. Foreign rulers took away diamonds etc including Kohinoor the precious diamond. After Independence of India on 15 August 1947 some Maharajahs became poorer. Now a lot of money is amassed by the rich. Indians are in the list of billionaires published by the Forbes book in America.

The following information about deposits in the Swiss Bank in Switzerland tells us that the illegal deposits wealth of the Indians is much more than any country in the world. The top five nations are.

Deposits in Swiss Bank from citizens of the different nations.

India	$1451 billions
Russia	$470 " "
U.K.	$390 " "
Ukraine	$100 " "
China	$96 " "

India tops in looting, amassing deposits in secret accounts in Swiss Bank.

Loss of a Great Leader

His Beatitude Mar Narsai E. de Baz, Metropolitan of Lebanon, Syria and Europe and Deputy to the Catholicos Patriarch passed away on 14th February 2010 in Arizona, USA. He was buried in Chicago on Friday 19th February after Holy Qurbana in Mar Gewargis Cathedral in Chicago. The Funeral attended by several Prelates, Archdeacons, Chor bishops and clergy was lead by H.H. Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East.

Mar Narsai and I were born in the same year 1940 and we were made bishops in the same year 1968. We served in the same committees. He visited India four times, in November 1995, March 1998, January 2000, August 2001. He wanted to come to India in January 2010 to attend the 13th Holy Synod. He telephoned and informed me his greetings for the success of the Holy Synod and expressed his desire to visit India after his chemo therapy treatment in Arizona will be over.

Although he could not attend the 12th Holy Synod in Dohuk, North Iraq in October 2008, he was present for the consecration of Mar Meelis Zaia as Metropolitan of Australia & New Zealand as well as the Patriarchal Council that met after the consecration in Sydney in December 2008. He got up early morning and went for his walk and prepared breakfast for me. He promised to come with me to meet the Rulers in UAE to request for a plot of land to construct our first church in the Gulf area in recent centuries. We had churches in Qatar and neighboring places in the 5th & 6th centuries etc. He was willing to go to Dubai, UAE after the Lent season of 2009.

Our friendship goes back to 1984 when I attended the Holy Qurbana celebrated by him in the Assyrian Club in Ealing, London in 1984. He invited me to Beirut to discuss with him the

plan for the unity of the two calendar groups. It did not take place at that time. But later in 1984 itself I met with Patriarchs, Mar Dinkha IV and Mar Addai II in Chicago. Later in 1990 a committee of four Metropolitans was formed by both Holy Synods meeting in Baghdad, Iraq. We both were in that committee as senior Metropolitans of both groups. Mar Narsai of Kirkuk and Mar Gewargis Sliwa of Iraq were the other two Metropolitans.

As this committee was scheduled to meet in August 1990 and I was getting ready to fly to Baghdad the army of Iraq marched to Kuwait on the midnight of August 2nd. That stopped the plans. Later in January 1991 Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV visited India when Americans were bombing Baghdad. We met in Trichur and made plans for the unity of the Indian Church if the unity at the universal level was not immediately possible.

God used Mar Narsai Metropolitan to come to India in November 1995 along with Bishop Mar Meelis Zaia to finalize the terms of unity within the Indian Church. I do not hide hear the secret visit I made to Chicago that year to meet with His Holiness to send a delegation of two prelates for finalizing the unity talks made by His Holiness in January 1991 in Trichur. After the unity of November 1995 I visited Mar Narsai Metropolitan in 1997 after the Pro Oriente meeting in Annaya, Lebanon. Mar Narsai Metropolitan took me to his four churches in Beirut. He took me to his hill resort near Beirut.

He was a true Assyrian. He was bold to state that he does not want to go to heaven, if there are no Assyrians there. Yes, my dear brother, Go in Peace (*Zil Bashlama*) to heaven where many Assyrian martyrs and saints are waiting for you. Rest in Peace.

One of the thousand jokes I published come to my mind. The loving husband of a quarrelsome lady died, The lawyer built a

nice tomb. When the wife went to see the tomb, she was not pleased by the words written in bold letters REST IN PEACE. She instructed her lawyer to add the following words, "Till we meet again".

The following is the email that appeared on my emails as I was typing this book. I did not believe that it is true. I am not wasting my time to claim the BMW. Yet I record it here as a warning to others who may be cheated by such attractive offers. Some of my readers may know the method to catch such criminals who deceive ordinary human beings with attractive offers.

BMW AUTOMOBILE COMPANY.
22 Garden Close, Stamford,
Lincs, PE9 2YP, London
United Kingdom.

This is to inform you that your e-mail i.d have just won you £500,000,00 Pounds, from the BMW CAR PROMO, Ref Number:BMW:2541236004/25

Contact:Barrister Morris

Mail bmw_funds@live.co.uk

Forward the following details to enable us clear your file for immediate payment and delivery of your winnings:

1. Full Name:

2. Full Address

3. Status:

4. Occupation:

5. Age

6. Sex:

7. Country

8. Tel. Number:

9. Annual Income.

10. wonbefore

11. State

Please Note Your Details Must Be Complete
NUMBER: +44 8713152457
BMW PROMOTION
MANAGER
DAVID WOOD

Another example is given below.

Reminder,

Your 801,613.00 euro is ready, Our officer is waiting for your data so that he can bring your winning consolation prize of 801,613.00 euro to you in your country.

You won 801,613.00 euro from Irish Award Promo. Send your *1.Full Name:

2.Full Address:*3.Occupation:****4.Telephone number: *****5.Age:**** 6.Sex:******* 7.Nationality: to us via email: mr.montefred@rediffmail.com

Mr Monte Fred Assistant Draw Director

A third sample of cheating is the e mail I received today. I am reproducing it to here not to allure my readers in to this method of cheating. Let all my readers be aware of such methods men and women adopt to make money in the form of commission to the probable amount one will get. In fact the ordinary people only lose money in advance and the original sender of the e mail will get something out of it, much less than fifty fifty.

Acknowledge,

I am sorry to encroach into your privacy in this manner, I find it pleasurable to offer you my partnership in business,

I only pray at this time that your address is still valid.

An Iraqi made a fixed deposit in my bank branch (Bank Millennium SA) where am a director and he died with his entire family in the war leaving behind no next of kin, I'm ready to share 50/50 with you if you choose to stand as my deceased client next of kin.

If interested mail me at the address below.

Regards,

Roman Swierczynski

ul. Stanislawa Zaryna 2A

02-593 Warszawa

Email: b.roman_5@yahoo.com.hk

The Passport fees in America are increasing. The latest news from New York Times is reproduced below.

Passport fees are increasing effective July 13, the State Department recently announced. The cost of getting a brand-new passport for someone 16 or older has jumped 35 percent, to $135 from $100, and for those under 16 has increased by nearly 25 percent, to $105 from $85. If you've already got your passport, you're not immune: the cost of renewing your passport for those 16 and over has increased 47 percent, to $110 from $75.

Travelers heading to Mexico and Canada by land or sea and those heading to the Caribbean by sea can save a few bucks by using a passport card, which for adults will cost

$55 (a $10 increase) and for children will cost $40 (up $5). Among the other changes that could affect travelers: a new fee of $82 for appending pages to your passport, which will undoubtedly affect mainly globetrotters whose visas and stamps are overflowing, and an increase in the fee for reporting a birth abroad ($100 from $65). The fee hikes are among several consular fees being increased after what the department called an exhaustive study of the true cost of providing consular services.

In conclusion let me express my immense gratitude to Mar Narsai Press, Thrissur 680001, Kerala, which printed most of my 70 books. It is a printing Press started 84 years ago to print religious books in English, Malayalam and Syriac.

Contrary to my previous custom I took a decision to request one of my siblings to write a Foreword to my book. My elder sister Leela, married to Professor Dr. Alexander Alex, living in USA for nearly half a century has been a reader of my many books. She earned a Master's degree in Library science after going to USA. She was trying to be in Thrissur to be with her brothers and sisters on the occasion of my completing 70 years of age. Unfortunately she did not have the courage to neglect medical advice, as both her son and daughter are medical doctors.

Indians cannot travel to USA after the age of 70 without medical certificate from a cardiologist with an ECG report etc. I am grateful to her for writing a brief foreword to this book.

Trichur 680 001, Kerala — Mar Aprem Metropolitan

Chapter 1

To Chicago

Within a few days of my remark that I may not renew my American visa when the present visa expires next year, I had to travel to Chicago to attend the funeral of Mar Narsai Metropolitan of Lebanon who expired in Phoenix, Arizona where he had come for better medical treatment.

As we had known each other for than 26 years personally I decided to attend the funeral scheduled in Chicago. My travel Agent John Verghese told me that there is a convenient flight from Cochin to Chicago to arrive at the same day of departure from Cochin. The flight is of Etihad Airlines belonging to the UAE. It flies through Abu Dhabi. Since there is no much problem of connecting flights I preferred to travel by Etihad Airlines.

Etihad is the National Airline of the United Arab Emirates. It is Abu Dhabi based and not Dubai based like Emirates which I have used in my previous trips. To go to Chicago, ETIHAD is better, as it flies direct from UAE to Chicago. To go to New York the Emirates may be better, as it flies direct from UAE to New York.

Our home

On-going redevelopment work at Abu Dhabi Airport has significantly enhanced the experience for Guests and allows us to expand and meet our ambitious growth plans.

The second runway at Abu Dhabi International Airport, which was officially opened in October 2008, is part of a large scale AED 25 billion redevelopment and expansion project at the airport. A Midfield Terminal Complex will complete the redevelopment within the next few years, increasing the annual capacity to 40 million passengers.

Etihad Airways Terminal 3 at Abu Dhabi International Airport, opened in February 2009, is dedicated to Etihad and extends the airport's capacity by 5 million Guests per year.

In tandem with this, we have recently moved to a new Head Office building close to the airport. This purpose-built facility is part of a three building complex that also includes a state-of-the-art Training Academy and the Al Abraj complex of Etihad offices and residential accommodation for staff.

Air India Express has 45 flights per week to the Gulf area such as Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, and Al Ain in UAE, as well as Muscat, Doha(in Qatar), Bahrain, Kuwait and Salala. Air India Express may be cheaper than Etihad or Emirates, both belonging to UAE. As for travel most people do not stick to national airlines. What they want is convenient connection and cheaper flights. As for the safety most airlines are safe. But there are causes beyond control that lead to accidents. As I am writing this book I read in the newspaper about the accident in Cochin international airport for an Emirates flight.

The news from 'The New Indian Express, Monday April 26. 2010.

Close shave for air passengers from Dubai

Many hurt as Emirates flight to Kochi hits air pocket over Goa

K J Francis Joy | ENS Nedumbassery, April 25

> THE passengers and crew of an Emirates flight from Dubai to Kochi had a providential escape when it suddenly fell over 200 feet after hitting an air pocket over Goa air space on Sunday.
>
> Though the aircraft with 350 passengers, 11 cabin crew and three pilots landed safely here, about 20 passengers and some crew members suffered minor in-juries in the incident.

The aircraft was reportedly fly-ing at an altitude of about 35,000 feet when it hit the air pocket. The pilots immediately took it down by about 200 feet.

The shocked passengers did not get enough time to put on the seat belts and they were reportedly thrown around inside the plane. The passengers recalled that many of them were screaming and shouting fearing that the air-craft was crashing.

The sealing of the inside cabin was damaged when the passengers pulled down the oxygen masks in a hurry, sources said.

However, the pilots managed a safe and smooth landing of the aircraft at Kochi airport at 9 am. The injured were rushed to different hospitals after being given first aid.

Flight grounded, DGCA launches probe

New Delhi: Meanwhile, the affected Emirates aircraft has been grounded and the DGCA has launched a probe into the incident, reports PTI. (Press Trust of India) The aircraft would leave the country only after it was certified, officials said. The statements of the injured passengers, cabin crew and pilots were also being recorded as part of the investigation into the incident, they added.

On Thursday 17th February 2010 I left Trichur by car ten minutes after midnight and I was in Cochin international airport by 1.20 a.m. Without waiting for the trolley to carry my baggage I pulled my bag and walked into the departure hall. As soon as I was looking for the counter of the Etihad Airlines, some of their staff came near me and told me that they will upgrade me from the economy class to the business class. When they tried to check my reservation they noticed that I had ordered vegetarian non –

diary food. So it will be difficult to get special food in business class without previous arrangement. So I told that I would prefer economy class, as it is my Lent season I have to observe the church regulations regarding the meal. Finally they said that they would send message to transfer vegan meal to business class. I remembered the controversy recently about a remark made by Mr.Shashi Tharoor, the Honourable minister of state for Foreign Affairs that economy class is cattle class. When people began to complain he clarified that it was a common expression about the economy class in the flights.

When we reached Abu Dhabi there was fog and therefore we had to remain in the air for another one hour to get clearance to land. The Captain assured us that he has enough fuel in the aircraft to fly for an extra hour or too. He repeated the same claim after half an hour to assure the passengers. As our flight got delayed to land the connecting flights of some passengers had left. Fortunately there was still time for our flight that was a direct flight from Abu Dhabi to Chicago.

I took my morning dose of insulin and some tablets. Another passenger who observed me taking insulin etc came up to me and said, "Bishop, eat something, I noticed that you have taken insulin injection." I replied him," it is okay. We are about to get into the next flight and we will get enough food before my sugar level goes down. My doctor had asked me to take insulin half an hour before food". He gave me a packet of sandwich which he said he bought from inside the airport. I took one piece and returned the packet to him saying that was enough as we were going to eat within half an hour in the flight. I do not know him. Some times we are warned not to accept anything eatable from strangers.

As soon as the flight was announced all the passengers got up from their seats and rushed to get first entrance in the aircraft so

that we get enough space for placing our bags and overcoats just above our seats. If we are slow to board, the space above our seats are used by another passenger who has two bags and a laptop and a coat. Some passengers never listen to the advice, "travel light".

After we flew for more than 14 hours the captain announced that we are about to land in Chicago's O'Hare international airport. As we landed I began to wonder whether I am going to face a lot of questions from the immigration officers, as I did not have a special invitation to funeral service. Although I had ten years visa the immigration officials can question me about the purpose of that particular visit. So I prayed hard to get a kind immigration officer to open my passport and to feel sympathy to my situation. Since it was an emergency there was no time to get special invitation letter. I was anticipating encountering some tough questions from the suspicious officers at the immigration counter.

As I was waiting for my turn an officer told me to move from there to go to any vacant counter to present my passport and visa papers. I walked to the last person. A lady was sitting there. I do not have any clue to determine whether a man or a lady officer will be kind to aliens like us. With prayer in my heart I placed my passport in front of the lady at the final counter. As soon as she opened my passport she said to me, "Bishop Mar Aprem, I belong to the Church of Mar Dinkha. Tomorrow I am going to the church to attend the funeral of the bishop who passed away. I am an Assyrian. You are most welcome to America."

I thanked God for the guardian angel that helped me, although I had feared to face some tough questions, which some Indians are facing in American airports. As I had a beard and a hat that looked like Osama Bin Laden I was mentally prepared for tough questions. I am usually interrogated regarding the purpose of my visit. But here there was no question. She kissed my ring and

asked permission to take a photo with me. I asked her name but refrain from mentioning it here. Some of my readers may give trouble to her for letting an Indian walk through the immigration counter without tough questioning.

My hesitations changed into happiness and great relief. I walked out and saw the smiling face of my nephew Sanil Mooken waiting for me.

The Assyrians are scattered today in the following countries.

Europe	North America	Middle East	Rest of World
Austria	Canada	Iran	X-Soviet Union
Denmark	USA	Iraq	India
France		Jordan	Australia
Germany		Turkey	New Zealand
Greece		Lebenon	
Holland		Syria	
Italy		United Arab Emirates	
Spain			
Sweden			
Switzerland			
United Kingdom			

Sanil Mooken works as an I.T. Manager, Analyst Encompass Lighting Group in North Linder Avenue in Skokie, suburb of Chicago. I remember visiting that factory in Skokie when it was called Tech lighting. Now it has grown as seen in the following information which I gathered from the website.

Based in Skokie, IL, the Encompass Lighting Group has developed some of North America's premier lighting brands including Tech Lighting, tiella, 2 thousand degrees, T~trak, Element, Wilmette Lighting Company, and LBL Lighting.

Encompass delivers products and sales programs focused on innovation and style. The hallmarks of each brand in the Encompass portfolio are precision design and engineering, outstanding quality and consistent, superior service.

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Additionally, Encompass Lighting Group prides itself on custom manufacturing capabilities and works with the customer to provide custom design solutions for individual environments.

Encompass offers distributorship services through a vast network of independent sales representatives, lighting showrooms and industry specialists across North America - and worldwide. From start to finish, the logistics of the entire Encompass Lighting manufacturing and distribution process assures that customers get the best lighting fixtures possible in the market today.

On Friday morning, February 18th, Sanil Mooken drove me to the St. George's Cathedral, the biggest church of the Assyrians. We reached the church at 8 a.m. before the Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV arrived. The Assyrians standing near the gate opened it for my car, as they saw me sitting in the front seat. As there is shortage of space for parking the car inside the church compound they open the gate only for prelates or such VIPs. In a previous trip when my niece Dr. Asha was driving the man at the gate did not open the gate. So I took of my headgear and

showed it through the window, as my hat is the Identification Card or Badge. With an apologetic face he opened the gate.

The prelates greeted each other in the vestry rooms behind the altar. We had bid good bye in Trichur less than a month earlier at the Holy Synod. It was time to walk through the church hall to the door at the west end of the church. We stood in line for the casket to arrive at 8.30 a.m. as scheduled. After much waiting when we enquired we learned that the funeral home understood that the casket should be brought at 9.30 a.m. instead of 8.30 a.m. We asked them to bring it immediately as we were expecting it at 8.30 a.m and the people had gathered in the shivering cold in front of the cathedral located at the H.H. Mar Dinkha IV Boulevard in Tuihy.

As we were waiting for more than half an hour standing in attention I was really tired. Some deacon or priest who guessed that I must be tired because of my long travel from India was kind enough to bring a chair so that I could sit. I hesitated to sit while all other prelates were standing. Yet being the oldest prelate, (as the Catholicos Patriarch had not arrived), I satisfied my conscience in sitting there while all other prelates were standing. Then Bishop Mar Joseph Sargis, who is ten years younger to me, requested for a chair to be brought for him to sit. One common factor between us is that we both have the longest beard among our prelates. Nobody tried to measure it so that I cannot comment on it correctly. The third longest beard is of Bishop Mar Emmanuel Joseph of Canada. For the fourth place there may be difference of opinion. The nominations will be for the Catholicos Patriarch, Mar Gewargis Sliwa Metropolitan of Baghdad and some others. The two clean shave faces are of Metropolitan Mar Meelis Zaia and Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis. My personal feeling is that all prelates should have a beard like Jesus Christ.

Bishop Mar Joseph Sargis used that time of both of us sitting on chairs to request me to write a history of tribe, Jelu. He says that the Jelu tribe has at least 800 years of history. The men of Jelu called Jilwaye are considered as brave people among the Assyrians. I had met the predecessor of the present bishop in 1962 when I went to Baghdad. His name was Bishop Isho Sargis, nephew of Bishop Zaia Sargis who had a large beard as I see in the photos. Zaia Sargis had died in 1951 when his nephew Archdeacon Isho was consecrated as the Bishop by Mar Yoseph Khananisho Metropolitan (died July 1977).

In 1962 I attended the funeral service of the mother of Mar Isho Sargis along with Mar Yoseph Khananisho Metropolitan, Mar Yokhannan Philipose Episcopa and others. I had visited Mr. Lira Isho, a rich tobacco merchant form the Jelu tribe who had donated land for the construction of Mar Zaia Cathedral in Karradat Mariam, in Baghdad which was the biggest church in the Assyrian Church globally. It was demolished by Saddam Hussain Government for the safety of the government residences in that area. Yes, I must state that the Saddam Hussain built another church in compensation for the church which was demolished.

At 9.15 a.m. the casket arrived. The clergy carried the casket. We brought it near the altar in a procession with chanting funeral anthems. At 9.30 a.m.Catholicos Patriarch MAR DINKHA IV celebrated Holy Qurbana. As the Cathedral was full with about 1500 people, it was announced that only the clergy and the close relatives of the late Metropolitan should receive the Holy Communion. After the Holy Qurbana there was the service of bidding farewell to the altar. The casket was taken like a procession inside the Cathedral. Finally the casket was to touch the wall of the altar on both sides to bid a final farewell.

The procession went out from the front door of the Cathedral to the road with the casket. The casket was carried by the Deacons.

Deacon Nabeel Isaac, as hefty deacon was in the front. I was reminded of Simon Cyrenne was forced to carry the Cross when Jesus Christ was taken to Golgotha for crucifixion. Khalil Gibran, the famous poet from Lebanon, had written that Simon was a strong man and he was happy that he got the privilege carrying the heavy Cross. Although this casket was really heavy the strong deacon, along with other deacons, must have been happy that they had the privilege to carry their beloved Metropolitan. In Chicago this was the first funeral of a prelate of the Assyrian Church of the East.

The only other prelate who was buried in America was in California in 1975, following the assassination of His Holiness Mar Eshai Shimon, Catholicos Patriarch on 6 November 1975.

When we got of the Cathedral I felt the chill. My overcoat was inside the room behind the altar. As I was walking in front of the procession I thought that it was not fair to turn back and search for my overcoat. Bishop Mar Joseph Sargis asked some body to go back to the room to fetch his walking stick. He is 10 years younger to me. He often used his walking stick not owing to old age, but as a status of dignity as a bishop. We had to wait a few minutes till we arrange the prelates to get into different cars in the procession.

I was riding in the same car along with the Catholicos Patriarch till the cemetery. Then we walked in a procession chanting more songs. Fortunately the sun began to shine and the temperature began to rise from the zero centigrade to something like 10 degree centigrade.

After the burial service in the cemetery the prelates and the guests except the Catholicos Patriarch went to the Hanging Gardens banquet hall for a meal and Memorial meeting. Messages from all over the world were read there. Mar Meelis Metropolitan

spoke words of condolence. I gave the final prayer in English. All the other proceedings were in Aramaic and modern Assyrians. After the meeting the prelates stood in a row to receive the condolences from the people.

I was able to meet many Assyrians I had met in California or Detroit or New York. People had come from all parts of USA and Canada to attend the Funeral of Mar Narsai de Baz, Metropolitan of Lebanon, Syria and Europe. Dr. Francis Murad Ph.D. from Phoenix, Arizona had accompanied the dead body of the Metropolitan. I was staying in his house about 15 months earlier. There were friends from Detroit. Some of them told me, "Mar Aprem, your friend Sabah has gone to Afghanistan to work". He is an electrician and was a dear friend of mine who was driving me when I was visiting Detroit three years ago. Last time when I was in Chicago in 2008 he drove from Detroit just to meet me. Fr. Benjamin Benjamin who was Vicar in Detroit greeted me.

Mar Narsai Metropolitan of Kirkuk, Iraq belonging to the old Calendar group came to attend the funeral. I was happy to see him. I have not seen him after the unity of the two calendar groups in India in November 1995. I do hope that soon the two calendar groups will work together as unite as we did in India in November 1995. It was my privilege to ordain him as a priest on 26 September 1968 in Mar Zaia Cathedral in Karradat Maryam in Baghdad, Iraq. Rev. Archdeacon Awiqam Pithyon had come with Mar Narsai Metropolitan to participate in the funeral service. I understood from the Patriarch that Bishop Emmanuel Eliyah, Bishop ordained in the old calendar group, and now working in Chicago had come the previous day to offer condolence.

The Mar Geevarghese Cathedral in H.H. Mar Dinkha Boulevard too has a good bookstore in its basement. Our Church does not have enough books in English language for the benefit of the members of our Church as well as to the outsiders.

Personally I feel that this Church can move their bookshop from the basement to the car park facing the main road. That will help people passing through the road an attraction to go to buy an English book that tells the history of this great missionary Church. Many Christians outside Assyrian circles do not know enough about our Church.

This defect can be rectified if other Christians have access to our bookstores. The volunteer who works at the bookstore should be competent to speak English. When I went some five years ago to the basement of the Mar Geevarghese Cathedral to find out whether my out of print book **"Laugh with the Bishop"** was available in their Bookstore, the young lady could not speak English. Finally I searched that book myself and found out that there were in a corner some copies of that book which I was searching for. At that time I was indeed happy to see my book **"Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV. The Man and His Message"** visibly displayed properly.

Metropolitan Mar Meelis Zaia of Australia and New Zealand who had come to Arizona and to Chicago to attend the last days of Mar Narsai Metropolitan was assigned to go to Beirut soon after the funeral and the 3rd day Memorial service in Chicago to make the necessary arrangements for the smooth administration of the diocese of Lebanon in the vacancy caused by the death of Metropolitan Mar Narsai de Baz.

On Saturday after the funeral the prelates were gathered for a discussion and lunch with the Patriarch in the residence of His Holiness in Birch Avenue, Morton Grove in the suburb of Chicago. Bishop Ramzi R.Musallam, Arabic speaking bishop attached to the Polish National Church in the USA had sought permission to join our Church. He is not interested to continue a Roman Catholic. We suggested that he should learn our faith and traditions. He should start celebrating the Holy Qurbana

according to the Addai and Mari *Thakhsa*. Bishop Mar Awa Ruvel, Secretary of the Holy Synod, was asked by the Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV to visit the young Bishop and his congregation, and to teach them about our liturgy.

The people in Lebanon visited the Bishops House in Beirut, Lebanon to offer their condolences. Mar Aprem Athniel, Bishop of Syria as well as Mar Gewargis Sliwa, Archbishop of Iraq went to Beirut for to receive condolences from the Metropolitans and civic leaders of Lebanon. Metropolitan Mar Meelis Zaia of Australia and New Zealand went to Beirut soon after the funeral and the 3rd day Memorial service in Chicago to make the necessary arrangements for the smooth administration of the diocese of Lebanon in the vacancy caused by the death of Metropolitan Mar Narsai de Baz.

Bishop Ramzi R, Musallam was born one day after I was born, about 39 years later. On 14 June 2009 when Bishop Ramzi completed 30 years of age I was 69 years and one day old. The following information available in the internet on his website http://www.arabiccatholicarchdiocese.org is reproduced below. He told me, "Your English is very good", referring to the extempore prayer I conducted in English language in an otherwise Assyrian gathering after the burial of Mar Narsai Metropolitan. Although English is not my mother tongue I thank God for giving me felicity to read, write and speak English well.

Current City: New Millport, Pennsylvania, U.S.A

Birthday: June 14, 1979

Hometown Palestine, Milford, CT

Religious Views: Assyrian Church of the East, Diocese of Pennsylvania

Likes and Interests

Activities:

Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania Assyrian Church of the East

Contact Information

Email: frmusallam26@yahoo.com

Website: http://www.arabiccatholicarchdiocese.org

Education and Work

Grad School: Notre Dame M.A.Divinity

College:Notre Dame B.A.Theology

High School: Jonathan Law High School

Employer: Assyrian Church of the East Diocese of Pennsylvania

Position: Bishop

Location: New Millport, Pennsylvania, USA

Description: Assyrian Church of the East

Bishop Ramze Musallam's request is under consideration of the Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV. I do not know what will be the final decision of our Church regarding this young bishop.

Chapter 2

St.Andrews Parish

The Assyrian Church of the East in Chicago Metropolitan area has five churches.

1. St. John Assyrian Church.

   1421 West Lawrance, Chicago, IL 60064

2. Mar Sargis Church.

   1850 West Cuyler, Chicago, IL 60613

3. Mar Gewargis Cathedral, H.H. Mar Dinkha IV Boulevard in Tuhy and 7201 Ashland Avenue, Chicago IL 60626.

4. Mart Mariam Church,

   550 Larsen Lane, Roselle, IL 60172

5. Mar Andrews Church.

   901 N. Millwaukee Ave. Glenview, Illinois 60025

St. John was the first Assyrian Church in Chicago area. Since 1940 Arch Deacon Sadok de Mar Shimon was the priest of that Church. When Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimon who was brought from Cyprus where he was a political refugee since 1933. By 1940 he was transferred to Chicago and wanted to get possession of the only Assyrian Church in Chicago. But Archdeacon Sadok de Mar Shimon (a second cousin of Catholicos Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimon) refused to hand over the Church.

Later Patriarch Mar Shimon built the Mar Sargis Church at 1850 in West Cuyler, Chicago. After some years Patriarch Mar Shimon moved his official residence to Araballo Drive, San Francisco, California where he remained till August 1973. Later he moved

from San Francisco to San Jose where he was shot dead on 6 November 1975.

The third Church is Mar Geevarghese Cathedral in Tuhy at 7201 Ashland Ave. A portion of this Road was named as **H.H. Mar Dinkha IV Boulevard**. Mar Geevarghese Cathedral was dedicated By H.H.Mar Dinkha IV in 1980. Perhaps it is the biggest Church among the Assyrian Churches which I have visited.

The second place goes to St. Hurmizd Cathedral in Sydney, Australia consecrated on 23rd December 1990. The 3rd is perhaps St. Mary's Church (near Hollywood) in Tarzana, California, USA. The Mar Geevarghese Cathedral was not constructed by the Assyrians. It was purchased from some others.

The fourth Church in Chicago is Mart Mariam at Rosalle, a suburb of Chicago. I had the privilege of attending the consecration of that Church along with late Bishop Paulose Mar Paulose in June 1997 when we went to Chicago for the Holy Synod.

Assyrians began to increase in Chicago area. This Assyrian congregation was named after St. Andrews in 2009. The present Church was a Jewish Synagogue, 901 North Milwaukee Ave. This is the only Church in our universal Church which is named after Mar Andreos.

St. Andrews is the fifth parish in Chicago area founded some 9 years ago. Cor-episcopa Dr. George Toma is the founding vicar of this parish. He is the Secretary to Catholicos Patriarch. This parish had no church. I had celebrated Holy Qurbana two times before. But last year they bought a church, a synagogue of the Jewish people and modified it as a church.

With Patriarch's permission I celebrated Holy Qurbana in this new Church. They have ten deacons in that parish. Adnan David is licensed electrician in whose house I stayed one day in October

2008. In 2009 he was ordained a deacon by our Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV. His father late Ezaria David was a friend of mine through Voice of the East magazine. This time also he entertained me for a dinner with his uncle Nestorius, a rare name among Assyrians. Deacon's mother who lives alone gave a good Assyrian breakfast like last time. Deacon Adnan grows fish in his backyard. He told me that I should visit him next time, not in Lent season, so that he wants to feed me good fish. He says *Mahi Mahi* is tastier than other fish.

Like some Assyrian churches, St. Andrews Church has a good bookstore. One lady came and presented me an Assyrian Dictionary. It is arranged alphabetically in English with meaning in Assyrian. It is useful for a non- Assyrian like me. Personally I had attempted to write one like that after I wrote **Teach Yourself Aramaic**. This book is still available. It is a useful book for non-Assyrians to read and write Aramaic in two months.

St. Andrews Church has about twelve classrooms in the basement, used by the Sunday school, youth group, choir group etc. It has a good congregation. The church was full. About 500 people attended Holy Qurbana. Seven deacons and the Chor Bishop assisted me. The choir was good. We had breakfast in the hall after the Holy Qurbana.

Chicku (Chacko) son of my younger sister Prabha Cherian is working as an IT Engineer in barcodes inc.in Chicago since 2008. His wife Smitha who is also an IT Engineer has completed MBA degree from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Campus.

I went to the Patriarchal Residence in Morton Grove the following week to record an interview conducted by our Media Committee. Fr.Antwan Latchin conducted the interview. A sub deacon was the camera man. Fr.Antawan is the head of the Media committee of our Church in addition to being the Secretary at the patriarchal Residence as well as the Vicar of the St. Johns Assyrian Church

in succession to Fr. Charles Klutz who had retired at superannuation. In the interview Fr.Antawan asked questions about our Church in India as well as the Mar Timotheus Memorial Orphanage in Kalathode as well as the Mar Timotheus Charitable Hospital in Kunnathumkara inaugurated by the Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV in January 1991.

The same day we had a gathering of children in Chicago adopted from the Mar Timotheus Memorial Orphanage. John and Eleanor Tomasula had sent a Christmas letter as usual with details about their children adopted from the Mar Timotheus Memorial Orphanage, Kalathode, Trichur. I had no time to reply, as I was busy in January with the preparation of the Holy Synod and the consecration of two bishops in India to assist me. Nevertheless I took the Christmas letter with me hoping to contact them while in Chicago. But I had no telephone number. With the help of Dr.Asha, my niece I traced the phone number of Polly Reuling who had adopted two girls from the Orphanage.

The Christmas letter of the Tomasulas had the following human interest stories about Paul as well as their adopted daughter Anne. May I quote two paragraphs from that letter?

> "Paul's 7 years of research has attracted the notice of the Financial Planning Association. They recently awarded him a special prize for developing an investment approach that is historically based and can play both offense and defense. Some consider it a significant break through for the investment community by doing away with the fictional assumptions used by most investment advisors. In addition to the special award, Paul presented his historically based approach at the annual Financial Planning Association Conference in Anaheim, CA in October.

Anne and Chris moved to a 3 bedroom apartment in Chicago in October. We visited a few weeks ago and enjoyed seeing their tree and how they have decorated the apartment. Baby Christopher has his own room now. Anne is still manager of the signage group at the State Street Sears store. Chris has opened an auto repair business and does snow plowing. Anne and he are loving parents and take wonderful care of Christopher."

John and Eleanor Tomasula donated $100 to the Orphanage. Polly Reuling donated $3000 to the Orphanage. I counted the 000 in the Cheque, as I usually do not see such generous donations. Thus my current visit helped the children in the Orphanage. The guests remembered my mother Mrs. J.D. Mooken who donated her land for this Orphanage and took care of these children and worked hard for the legal formalities of foreign adoptions of these lucky children. Our Orphanage for the past few years does not have license for foreign adoptions. The Government gives license for only a limited number of Orphanages for foreign adoptions. This policy of the Indian Government is to avoid selling children or their organs to foreign countries.

The Vicar of the St. Andrews parish is sending lessons for Bible study by e mail to hundreds of people around the world every week. The letter he writes every week gives news and publicity for his parish. Reproduced below is his letter sent in the fourth week of April 2010.

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ

Greetings and blessings you may receive:

I am thankful to our worshipful God for all the blessings which he has bestowed upon all of us to be able to study His Divine words and to explain their meaning according

to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and understanding of the Holy Church.

Today I am emailing to your attention the explanation of the second Beatitudes of the Lord. I hope you all will study it carefully and will benefit spiritually from its content.

Our teaching programs are as follows:

Adult Bible study on Tuesday at 7:30 PM.

Adult Bible study on Friday evenings at 7:00 PM.

Sunday school at 9:00 AM

Friday school at 7:00 PM

Youth Bible study on Friday evenings at 7:00 PM.

Do not forget to register your children for Soccer tournament.

We look forward to worship with you on Sundays at 9:00 AM.

Saint Andrew the Apostle is located at:

901 N Millwaukee Ave.

Glenview, Illinois. 60025

Your attendance and support certainly are the source of encouragement and will help us to spread the word of God courageously. Thanks for all your support for all our activities.

May our almighty God bless you all the times of your life. Amen

Yours in Christ,
Cor-Bishop Dr. George Toma
Saint Andrews Parish - Glenview, IL

About the Church of St. Andrews there was an interesting news item in 2009. I reproduce it below.

JEWS, ASSYRIANS SHARE WORSHIP SPACE

The church owns the building at 901 N. Milwaukee Ave. but is leasing it in its entirety to the synagogue. A shared-use agreement spells out when the church is allowed to use portions of the facility. But "the reality is we like each other very much and there's enough room in the building for both of us," Swatez said. "Actually," Toma said, "I can say we put the contract aside and there's a contract of love and respect."

Logistics

BJBE Rabbi Karyn Kedar had expected the sharing arrangement to be bittersweet, especially because the church's symbols and faith objects were put into an altar that replaced the ark where the torah scrolls had been housed. The scrolls are now kept in storage, and placed under a makeshift tabernacle during religious services. A tabernacle was used as a sanctuary for the Ark of the Covenant by Jews wandering in the desert after fleeing Egyptian bondage, Kedar said. "It shows how both difficult and sacred the temporariness is," she said. The analogy wasn't lost on Toma, who told Kedar his parishioners had also been wandering with a tabernacle until they found their home.

Formed in 2000, the St. Andrew parish moved its Bible study classes from basements to rented rooms in community centers in Mount Prospect and Des Plaines, and, for a while, space at Maryville Academy Des Plaines. Plans in 2004 to build a church at Shermer and Old Willow roads in Northbrook were abandoned because of the high cost, Toma said.

But the parish had raised enough money through walks, rallies, parties and breakfasts for the down payment on BJBE's 30,772-

square-foot building, he said. "It's a beautiful place. It has everything we need: a fellow-ship hall, classrooms, a big parking lot," Toma said. What's in future Toma said St. Andrew parish, the fifth for Assyrians in the Chicago area, is expected to draw from the more than 2,000 Assyrian families in communities surrounding Glenview.

The foundation walls for BJBE's new Synagogue, meanwhile, have started to rise at Lake-Cook Road and Pine Street in Deerfield. The new building will include a 613-seat main sanctuary, which will overlook an interior courtyard, a social hall that seats 1,110 and eventually a 27,000-square-foot school wing.

The church can't make major changes to the former BJBE facility until the synagogue moves out in October or November of 2009, Toma said. Until then, the synagogue worship services take place Friday nights and Saturday mornings and the church holds services Sundays.

"What's interesting is I believe more than 50 percent of what they read on Fridays, we read on Sundays," Toma said. "We also use the Old Testament, the prophets and the Books of Moses. It's amazing: two different ethnic groups worshipping God in one place in a period of 24 hours."

The church is now starting a Bible study class on Friday night, while the synagogue conducts Sabbath services.

Both religious entities have joined forces on programs that feed the homeless and teach English to adults and children. "This began as a financial arrangement, and we have now found friends and allies in our work together," Kedar said.

At present most Assyrians in Chicago live on the north side of the city. Although I have visited Chicago many times since 1967, that are 43 years, I had no idea regarding the location of the Assyrian churches. The greatest number resides in West Rogers

Park. Smaller concentrations live in Edgewater, Andersonville, Budlong Woods, Ravenswood, Hollywood Park, Peterson Park, East Rogers Park, and Albany Park. Many Assyrians have begun to move into the near north and northwest suburbs such as Skokie, Morton Grove, Niles, Des Plaines, Itasca, Schaumburg, and Arlington Heights. A sizeable community also resides in Elgin.

In addition to the five Assyrian Churches under His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV the following Assyrian Churches are also in Chicago.

Mar Ephrem Catholic Church
2537 W. Bryn Mawr, Chicago, IL 60659
Phone: (773) 271-8899

Mart Mariam Church Catholic Church
2851 W. Chase, Chicago, IL 60645
Phone: (773) 761-9401

Mar Odisho Parish
The Ancient Church of the East
6201 N. Pulaski, Chicago, IL 60646
Phone: (773) 539-3131

Assyrian Evangelical United Church
4447 N. Hazel, Chicago, IL 60640
Phone: (773) 561-6586

Assyrian Christian Church
3300 W. Bryn Mawr, Chicago, IL 60659
Phone: (773) 583-6105

Carter Westminster Presbyterian Church
4950 W. Pratt, Skokie, IL 60077
Phone: (847) 673-4441

St. John Baptist Syriac Orthodox Church
250 S. Villa Ave., Villa Park, IL 60181
Phone: (630)782-5712

The Assyrians have a history spanning over 6700 years. Moreover, they are the descendants of the ancient Assyrians- builders of the earliest civilization. Although the Assyrian empire ended in 612 B.C., they are today found in the present-day northern Iraq, southeastern Turkey, northeastern Syria, and northwestern Iran. The remains of the ancient capital of Assyria, Nineveh, lie within Mosul in northern Iraq.

The world's 4.5 million Assyrians are currently dispersed with members of the diaspora comprising nearly one-third of the population. A large number of the Assyrians in the diaspora live in North America, Europe, and Australia. In the U.S., the Assyrians have very successfully assimilated with the vast majority pursuing higher learning. Assyrians-Americans have also been quite patriotic- such that many have honorably served in the armed forces while others have sought and held public office. I had met Congressman Adam Benjamin Jr from Gary, Indiana during my visit to Washington D.C. in 1977. I met Congresswoman Anna Isho from California in Washington D.C. in June 2001. These are the only Assyrians who have been elected to the US Congress so far. In the State of Illinois John Nimrod of Chicago served as State Senator.

The first Assyrians came to Chicago initially as seminarians and later as medical students between the 1880's and 1890's. Eventually, by the turn of the century some Assyrians began to reside in Chicago. In 1909 about 30 Assyrian families and 600 Assyrian young men residents in Chicago. Many worked as carpenters, masons, painters, and tailors while others worked in factories, hotels, and restaurants.

Between 1915-1918 during World War I, 750,000 Assyrians were massacred by Turkish and Kurdish forces. The survivors of this Assyrian holocaust were scattered throughout the Middle East,

Europe and North America. By1920's, the Assyrian community in Chicago had increased to over 3000. The greatest concentration of these new arrivals settled around Clark and Huron. Most of these immigrants came from villages in northwestern Iran (Lake Urmia) and southeastern Turkey (Hakkari mountains).

By the 1930's, the Assyrian community slowly moved northward towards Lincoln Park, Lakeview, and Uptown. A steady stream of new arrivals from Iran, Iraq, and Syria continued through World War II. One survey estimated 5,000 Assyrians in Chicago in 1944. Chicago's Assyrian population was three times as great as any other American city. On August 12, 1940 **Time** magazine reported that the Assyrian population in the U.S. was 70,000 at the time when the Assyrian Patriarch Mar Eshai Shmun began to reside in Chicago.

Following another wave of persecution in Iran in 1948, more Assyrians arrived in the U.S. from Iran. In the 1960's, larger numbers entered from Iraqi cities such as Baghdad, Kirkuk, and Basra. During the Lebanese War of 1975-1992, many Assyrians immigrated to the Chicago area.

In the 1980's and 90's, larger numbers of Assyrians came to Chicago on account of the Iran-Iraq war. The suffering following Gulf War in 1991 and the subsequent U.N. embargo against Iraq has led to still more refugees fleeing shortages of food and medicine. Many Assyrians continue to arrive from Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and Turkey as students or as family reunification immigrants.

Chicago O'Hare International Airport (IATA: **ORD**, ICAO: **KORD**, FAA LID: **ORD**), also known as **O'Hare Airport**, **O'Hare Field**, or simply **O'Hare**, is a major airport located in the northwestern-most corner of Chicago, Illinois, United States,

17 miles (27 km) northwest of the Chicago Loop. It serves as the primary and largest hub for United Airlines and as a hub for American Airlines. It is operated by the City of Chicago Department of Aviation, associated with an umbrella regional authority.

In 2008, the airport had 881,566 aircraft operations, an average of 2,409 per day (64% scheduled commercial, 33% air taxi, 3% general aviation and <1% military). Prior to 2005, O'Hare was the world's busiest airport in terms of takeoffs and landings. Mainly due to limits imposed by the federal government to reduce flight delays at O'Hare, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport became the busiest by that metric in 2005. O'Hare currently accounts for over a sixth of the nation's total flight cancellations even after the limitations. O'Hare International Airport is the fourth busiest airport in the world with 64,397,782 passengers passing through the airport in 2009, a -9.07% change from 2008. O'Hare has a strong international presence, with flights to more than 60 foreign destinations. O'Hare is the fourth busiest international gateway in the United States with only John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City, Los Angeles International Airport and Miami International Airport serving more international passengers.

O'Hare International Airport has been voted the "Best Airport in North America" for 10 years by two separate sources: Readers of the U.S. Edition of *Business Traveler Magazine* (1998–2003) and *Global Traveler Magazine* (2004–2007). Travel and Leisure magazine's 2009 "America's Favorite Cities" ranked Chicago's Airport System (O'Hare and Midway) the second-worst for

delays, New York City's airport system (JFK, Newark Liberty, and LaGuardia) being the first.

Most of O'Hare Airport is in Cook County, but a section of the southwest part of the airport is in DuPage County.

Although O'Hare is Chicago's primary airport, Chicago Midway International Airport, the city's second airport, is about 10 miles (16 km) closer to the Loop, the main business and financial district.

The following accidents have been reported in Wikipedia on internet..

1057 fatalities have occurred as a result of accidents en route to or from Chicago O'Hare.

On February 9, 1998, American Airlines Flight 1340 crashed upon landing in Chicago from Kansas City International Airport injuring 22 passengers.

- On October 31, 1994, American Eagle Flight 4184 crashed over northwestern Indiana en route to Chicago, killing all 68 people on board.
- On September 8, 1994, USAir Flight 427 crashed on approach to Pittsburgh, PA, after departing O'Hare, killing all 132 people on board.
- On July 19, 1989, United Airlines Flight 232, en route to Chicago from Denver, crash-landed in Sioux City, Iowa, killing 111 people on board.

- On August 10, 1986, American Trans Air Flight 131 exploded on the tarmac at O'Hare, destroying the plane.
- On March 19, 1982, a USAF KC-135 crashed upon approach to O'Hare 40 miles northwest of the city (near Woodstock), killing 27 people on board.
- On May 25, 1979, American Airlines Flight 191 crashed just after takeoff on runway 32R from Chicago en route to Los Angeles International Airport in Los Angeles, California, killing all 271 people on board and two people on the ground. The crash remains the deadliest single-aircraft crash in United States history, and the worst aviation disaster in the nation before September 11, 2001.
- On December 20, 1972, North Central Airlines Flight 575 crashed upon takeoff, killing 10 passengers.
- On December 27, 1968, North Central Airlines Flight 458 crashed into a hangar at O'Hare, killing 27 onboard and one on the ground.
- On March 21, 1968 United Airlines Flight 9963 a Boeing 727 overran runway 09R on take off. None of the 3 crew on board were killed but injured and the aircraft was damaged beyond repair.
- On August 16, 1965, United Airlines Flight 389 crashed 30 miles (48 km) east of O'Hare while on approach, killing all 30 onboard.
- On September 17, 1961, Northwest Orient Airlines Flight 706 had a mechanical failure in control surfaces and crashed upon takeoff at Chicago O'Hare killing all 37 onboard.

Chapter 3.

Yonkers, New York

I flew from Chicago O'HARE airport to Newark, New Jersey. It is easier to go to the home of Geevarghese Emmatty in New Bergen, New Jersey. If I fly to New York's J F Kennedy airport, it is a crowded airport and we will be delayed at George Washington Bridge across the Hudson River. Babu Thermadom received me at the airport and took me to the house of Geevarghese Emmatty. When I entered the house I was pleasantly surprised to see three children sitting quietly and reverently on the sofa. They smiled at me. When I enquired who they were, they told their names and I realized that these three are children of Mini, eldest daughter of Geevarghese.

They used to live in Florida. But after the fourth daughter of Geevarghese was married and moved to her husband's house, there was nobody to be company to the old parents. So Mini with her husband Hans and three children moved to the home of their grandpa. I must admit I have not seen such obedient children anywhere else. I suspect that they were warned by their mother that they should stay "frozen" as their guest was a terror. I remember when I was young when we were running around the house playing with my siblings the servants used to frighten ussaying *Kokaan* cat will come.

The Assyrian Church of Mar Mari Shleeha in Yonkers, New York was known to me personally for more than four decades. Fr. Gewargis Sulaiman is a young Assyrian priest who is doing Masters Degree in family counseling. He is capable of leading this Assyrian congregation which serves our people in New York and New Jersey. Mr. Ivan Mirza, born in Russia is a good friend

of Indians attending this church. He is an admirer of the late Deacon Dr. Chacko and Mrs. Dr.Dorothy Chacko.

I went to Yonkers in January or February 1967 as a priest studying for S.T.M. degree in the Union Theological Seminary in New York City and spoke at the reception granted to the young Bishop of Iran Mar Khanania Dinkha who came to the ground breaking ceremony of this church. I had predicted in my speech that this young bishop, aged 31 will be the next Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East. A photo of that function is printed in the biography I authored about Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV.

During the following year Fr. Narsai Elias de Baz, a newly ordained priest, was appointed as the first Vicar of the Mar Mari Shleeha parish. Fr.Narsai Elias de Baz was the younger brother (seven years younger) of Qasha Aprim de Baz who was already working as a parish priest in USA. It was while he was a priest in this parish Qasha Narsai was consecrated as Bishop Mar Narsai of Lebanon by Catholicos Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun. He was one of the few priests who did not change his name at the time of consecration as bishop. Qasha Narsai became Bishop Mar Narsai in 1968

Mr.Geevarghese Emmatty, uncle of Fr. Santhosh Emmatty of Trichur, has been my friend for many years. His elder brother E.I.Paul was my classmate in graduating class of the Chaldean Syrian High School in Trichur 55 years ago in 1955. He wanted me to baptize his grandson in Mar Mari Shleeha Church. With Patriarchal permission I flew to Newark, New Jersey on Friday February 26. New York area was full of snow, with a temperature below Zero, worse than Chicago.

During the Holy Qurbana on Sunday February 28 some Indians were present. Samuel Pananchery with his wife and daughter, Mrs Elsamma Inasu Nellangara with her three sons, Valsan

Thermadom with his wife Shanthamma and two daughters and son, Simon (Babu) Thermadom with his wife Anne, their sister Jolly Abraham with her husband and their son who got married in Trichur in December and daughter Susan, Mrs. Mercy Cheeramban, Geevarghese Emmaty with his wife Thankamma, along with their two daughters Mini and Milini and two sons, Micky and wife Dr. Nisha as well as younger son Munna & Reshma with their sons Senna and Nikhil.

It is interesting to note that the whole family of Munna, all four of them were baptized by me in different dates in India and Yonkers. Many relatives of Geevarghese and Munna were also present for the baptism. Milini was a member of the choir in that church until she married a member of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church. Fr.Gevarghese Sulaiman and I had participated in that wedding.

After the Sunday morning Holy Qurbana, baptism and breakfast I went to bless the new house bought by John (Valsan) Thermadom in Greenburgh in White Plains, New York. Many of his relatives were there. I was not tired as suspected that I would. I was to attend the party in Munna's house before I was to return to Chicago the next day. I posed for photos in the snow just outside the house. In India most people will not believe if I tell them that I was standing outside on the heaps of snow.

New York is not the strongest area for the Assyrians. The Assyrians are more in California and Chicago area. California has eight parishes, San Francisco, Turlock, San Jose, Ceres, Modesto, Los Angeles, Orange County and San Diego. I have celebrated Holy Qurbana in five parishes, and visited Turlock and San Francisco parishes. The only one I have not visited is Ceres parish. We have visited our small parish in Sacramento some years ago. At present we do not have a parish in Sacramento.

All the West coast of USA has eight Assyrian parishes; the East coast of USA has only two, namely St Thomas Church, New Britain, Connecticut and Mar Mari Shleeha Church in Yonkers, New York. The people in New Jersey state comes to Yonkers which is close. We do not have an Assyrian parish in New Jersey. But Syriac Orthodox Church under Patriarch Zaka I of Damascus has a good parish in New Jersey even when I was a student in New York and Princeton (1966-1968).

In USA we have a large Church in Detroit, Michigan and a smaller, but older one in Flint, Michigan. There is a lovely Assyrian Church in Phoenix, Arizona under the able leadership of Bishop Aprim Khamis who has done much in building Churches in USA since he was the only Bishop for USA and Canada after the assassination of Catholicos Patriarch Mar Ishai Shimon on 6 November 1975.

In Phoenix there is a second parish started by Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis. This is called Mar Yousip Assyrian parish in Chandler, suburb of Phoenix, Arizona. The Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church in India has a congregation in Chandler. In India they say Syrian Orthodox Church. But outside India they say it is Syriac Orthodox Church. Because by Syrian Orthodox some people think that it is the Orthodox Church of the Syrians, citizens of Syria who are mostly Moslems. This city is likely to grow faster than other parts of USA. There is an Assyrian parish in Las Vegas. It is closer to California.

Deacon Rauman Benjamin of San Jose, California now working in Houston, Texas, told me recently in India that there is one Assyrian Church and a congregation of over 100 Assyrian families in Houston, Texas without a priest. Of course this area in Texas is under the jurisdiction of Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis. There are some Assyrians in Dallas, Texas too. I had been invited to

the house of Donald Daniel twice. He is an Assyrian businessman and one of the brothers of Deacon Dan Daniel in Los Angeles.

We drove through the streets of New York. There is a lot to see in New York. Since I had studied at the Union Theological Seminary, New York City in Broadway 120th street for my second Master's degree in Sacred Theology (STM degree) during 1966 -67 I did not show any interest to see the city of New York. Actually there was a lot to see.

The Empire State Building is still there as it was in 1966 when I climbed the tallest building at that time. It is still there, although several buildings in different parts of the world have come up with size taller than New York's famous skyscraper.

The New York of 2010 was different from the New York of 1966. Of course there was no time for sightseeing. Moreover, I am not a young boy to enjoy walking in the two feet thick snow. **The New Indian Express** newspaper published from Cochin and which I read every morning has the following news about that city. A brief paragraph from that newspaper helps my reader to have a peep into the city.

The news from 'The New Sunday Express, April 25, 2010.

> NYC (NEW YORK CITY) might be a city built on a history that tells a rags-to-riches tale. But the statue of Liberty still welcomes the huddled masses, students, tourists and immigrants alike, — all flocking to her shores looking for a better deal.
>
> The thrill for New York City visitor essentially comes from the energy exuding from Manhattan's frenzied

streets and soaring skyscrapers, charged by the eight million people who call the city home but if you want to spread out the yoga mat and find a bolt hole, far from the crowded sub-ways, the blaring NYPD (New York Police Department) sirens and hypnotizing 'I LOVE NYC' tee's, you can do that too, minus the Manhattan price-tag.

Chapter 4

Return from Chicago

On Tuesday March 2, 2010 I packed my bags and went to the residence of the Catholicos Patriarch in Morton Grove. I called early to make sure that they would give me the DVDs of the funeral of Mar Narsai Metropolitan. As soon as I rang the doorbell Chor Bishop George Toma came and greeted me. Then Fr. Antawan Latchin came with the two DVDs as he knew that I was in a hurry to go to the airport. Then Mrs. Christina who is the caretaker of the Patriarch's residence for many years (I do not know how many, definitely more than two decades) came to greet me. I told her that I am in a hurry as I have to leave today. She said that you said in two days over the telephone. I corrected that it is today and not two days.

As I was in hurry I thought that I will go without troubling our beloved Patriarch. But as a good shepherd who recognized my voice downstairs came down. As he saw my nephew Sanil Mooken, who is an IT Manager in Tech Lighting Company in Skokie His Holiness said that Sanil should become a deacon in the Church. Of course he is an active member of the St John Assyrian Church in Chicago. Fr. Antawan is the Vicar of that parish. He supported the suggestion of the Patriarch.

Actually five years ago Fr. Klutz who was the Vicar of the Church asked me to ordain Sanil as a deacon. But I told him I would not dare to do anything like that because he was unmarried at that time. If I ordained my nephew at that time, some jealous people would start rumours that I was planning to make him a Bishop to succeed me. Our Church outside India had such a tradition till recently but now no more. Now Sanil is married and is active in St. Johns Assyrian Church along with his wife Maria. Such a

complaint will not work. It is true that since I started to learn Aramaic in 1954, nobody from my parent's family came forward to be a clergyman in our Church during the past 56 years. Perhaps I have done enough service to the church equivalent to what two or three people from our family could have done. I was the first one in our family to serve the Church. I hope that I will not be the last. I have made up my mind not to push anybody from my relatives to follow my way.

We rushed to the O'HARE international Airport and checked in quickly. As expected I had to go through the special security check. I do not find vigorous check on my body to assure the security of the passengers in each flight. But many passengers reach to it because of all the passengers in each flight the special security check is done on the body of the foreign passengers only. The Americans and Europeans are subjected to this special frisking on the body. Last time I was given the option of special frisking on the body or a complete X-ray of my body. I chose X-ray. This time I was not given a choice.

I was in boarding gate by 5 p.m. The boarding time was 6.30 p.m. At 7.30 p.m. There was an announcement that the flight is delayed due to technical troubles. Finally it was cancelled. The passengers began to murmur. The Etihad airlines arranged alternate flights to passengers with immediate confirmed connections.

The airlines authorities arranged for other passengers like us who were going to Abu Dhabi only to stay in a good hotel near the airport and promised a sure seat in the next day's flight at the same time. We are asked to collect our baggage and wait for the shuttle bus to the hotel. It was midnight. The children began to cry. Poor mothers had to carry the baggage and their crying children to the shuttle bus. They had to call their husbands and inform them about the flight cancellation.

I did not call my relatives as I did not want to bother them. I did not think that they were watching the route of my flight in the computer and they began to worry as they could not find my flight in the air. Where was I hiding? My sister Leela Alex in Orlando, Florida was asking her daughter Dr. Asha where was I. Not swimming in the air, as the flight had not taken off. My nephew Sanil as well as my nephew Chacko nicknamed Chicku was trying to trace me. As my cell phone had no global roaming they could not contact me. I thought that they had slept and I would call them only the next morning to say that I did not reach Abu Dhabi and I was still in Chicago.

As soon as I reached the hotel I tried to contact Abu Dhabi people to inform the change in my plan. As I had no credit card the hotel staff stated I would have to a deposit to make telephone calls. I immediately gave $20 and went to my room. I dialed Abu Dhabi and India. But I got no connections. So I went down to the front desk and told them my telephone was not working properly. I requested their help for me to inform my people in Abu Dhabi not to wait for me in that flight, but to come the next day only. They said that my telephone bill for my use of the last few minutes exceeded $120. I have to pay $120 immediately. I told him that I would pay after I go to my room. I calculated in my mind that $120 meant about Rs.6000.I did not argue. I am an alien in America.

Meanwhile I requested their help to call Abu Dhabi. They tried but did not succeed. Finally I called Bishop Mar Yohannan in Trichur and asked him to inform U.A.E. people that I would be late by one day. The man at the front desk told me that the call was free as a compliment from him. He further told me since none of my five calls from my room did not go through I need not have to pay. He told me that I could get back my deposit of $20 at the time of my check-out.

He told an Indian guest to be careful about overseas call. The minimum for one call is $25. That is about 1200 Indian rupees for one call. My advice to my readers is never to telephone from a hotel room. It is terribly expensive.

On Wednesday morning I called my niece Dr. Asha to tell her that I had not left. Sanil and his wife Maria had seen me off in the previous evening. Both Sanil and Dr. Asha were tracing my flight with the help of the computer.

"We all were worried about your whereabouts", said a relieved Asha. I told her that I did not want my family to worry about me. I thought that they had not known about the cancellation of flight. I promised not to worry them in future, as I will be informing them if there is any cancellation in my flight. I hoped that there would not be any cancellation of my flights in future.

I felt guilty that I gave additional worry by not reporting to me the cancellation of my flight. I explained to them I did not want them to worry about me. I wanted them to sleep in peace. I promised them that next time I would behave more appropriately. Of course there is no possibility of cancellation of flight every time I travel.

When I went to get the boarding pass in the Etihad flight, the same officer who saw our difficulty in the previous day was standing and watching each passenger. I recognized him and smiled. He came near me and started chatting with Dr. Asha and myself. It is not difficult for any body to recognize me, due to my beard and the clerical garb. He enquired whether I had got complimentary hotel accommodation the previous night.

As if a compensation for the hardships I underwent the previous day owing to the cancellation of the flight he informed me that I am upgraded to the business class. I had no credit miles from the previous trips, as I was traveling by ETIHAD for the first time in

this trip. It was very kind of them. Some other passenger would have enjoyed it better. Because passengers in the business class get more free liquor than the tiny bottle the economy passenger gets. But to a teetotaler like me such special attention was of not any use, except nuisance.

The waiting room in the airport for the business class is an attraction. I went there and sat in style. There again the attraction is the variety of liquor freely available. I took tea there and a biscuit. I started writing this travelogue. It is a comfortable place to sit and write or read. Once you are airborne we may not feel that comfort to write. I did not carry my laptop in this trip. Hence I had to write by hand. Anyhow it was good to write down before I forget some details. Without spending too much time in the lounge I leisurely walked to departure gate.

US Catholics grow in number

Published Date: March 19, 2010

Tags: Catholic population, National Council of Churches, U.S. Catholics

The Catholic Church, and some other denominations have registered a growth in its membership in the United States and Canada, according to the 2010 edition of a yearbook published by the National Council of Churches.

The 78th annual edition of the "Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches" said membership numbers have gone up for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Assemblies of God, among others.

It also noted a continuing decline in membership of nearly all mainline Protestant denominations including the Southern Baptist

Convention, which reported a loss of members for the second year in a row. With more than 16 million members, it is still the nation's second largest denomination.

The Catholic Church — the country's largest denomination with more than 68 million members — reported a slight membership decline in the 2009 yearbook, but it rebounded this year with a 1.49 percent growth.

The Latter-day Saints grew 1.71 percent to almost 6 million members and the Assemblies of God grew 1.27 percent to about 2.9 million members.

The Rev. Eileen Lindner, editor of the yearbook since 1988 and NCC deputy general secretary for research and planning said in a statement that observers have attributed the membership decline in some churches to "an increasing secularization of American postmodern society and its disproportionate impact on liberal religious groups."

But Rev. Lindner, a Presbyterian minister, urged caution in interpreting the data and added: "American society as a whole has not experienced the kind and rate of secularization so clearly demonstrated during the last quarter-century in Western Europe." Source: Catholic Church in U.S. among religious bodies gaining members.

Chapter 5

Seventh Visit to Sharjah

It was in April 2005 I celebrated Holy Qurbana in UAE Mart Mariam parish. That was in the inauguration of the UAE Mart Mariam parish for both Indians and Assyrians.
During the first visit in April 2005 I stayed with Sajimon Nellissery. My nephew Pradeep Mooken working in Al Ain at that time came to see me in Abu Dhabi. In that visit I had celebrated Holy Qurbana at the Mar Thoma Church in Jabal Ali, Dubai. During that visit I made some contacts in that area in order to establish a parish in future. Fr. Lazar Madathampadi came from Trichur to assist me. I was coming from England on my way to India.
I celebrated one more Holy Qurbana later that year. It was in October 2005. Fr. P K. Raphael came with me from Trichur to assist in the Holy Qurbana. We conducted the service in Sharjah, as some people felt that Dubai is a distant place for more people. As we could not get any church on Friday morning as they had their own services at that time. Therefore we arranged Emirates National School in Sharjah.

In 2006 I made two more visits. Fr. Thomas Thermadom came for the Qurbana which was on 3rd March 2006. It was in a Hall of the CSI church. I had to preach in the CSI Malayalam service before rushing for our Holy Qurbana. My fourth visit was in October 2006. It was a difficult trip as my UAE visa had expired by a few hours. The details of those troubles are in my travelogue Wiesbaden to Moscow. Fr. E. V. Antony had come from Trichur to assist me for the Holy Qurbana.

In 2007 I could not arrange a visit to UAE. But I arranged Fr. Victor Kollanur to find an employment in JOYALUKKAS

Jewlery in Sharjah. It was a time when Fr.Jos Vengassery was going to Germany to study for Ph.D. in Old Testament. By that time we rented St.Philip's Chapel in St.Martin Anglican Church on an yearly basis for service on all Friday morning at 7.30.a.m.till 9.30 a.m. Later Deacon Sachin had completed his MBA studies in Chennai and found employment in UAE.

I was able to arrange two visits in 2008. First was in September on my way to USA and the second was in October while returning from USA, on my way to Dohuk, Kurdistan for attending the 12th Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church. In 2008 I did not need to bring a priest or a deacon to assist me for Holy Qurbana in UAE. Because, Fr. Victor and Deacon Sachin were already in that parish. The Vicar General Fr. Joju Anto (now Bishop Mar Yohannan) also came to UAE for Holy Qurbana in September. I ordained Deacon Sachin as priest when he came to Kerala in January 2009. I could not visit UAE in 2009 due to health reasons.

UAE has 492 hotels, out of which 63 are in Abu Dhabi. The following information about **Al Diar Dana Hotel** and **The Ramee Garden Hotel Apartments** taken from internet gives the readers some idea about the facilities offered there. I did not enquire the cost, as I had no plan to stay in a hotel. I am told that due to the financial recession around the globe the hotels in UAE are not fully occupied.

Therefore the hotel owners are offering cheaper rates.

In the heart of the city, near business, shopping, restaurants and the sea, the Al Diar Dana Hotel offers cosy and warmly decorated suites.

There are several dining and drinking venues at the hotel offering international food, exotic cocktails and live entertainment.

All the hotel's suites overlook the city or the marina. They all have in suite bathrooms, satellite TV, 24-hour room service and

same day laundry and dry cleaning. For those who wish to prepare their own meals, all rooms have kitchenette facilities.

Hotel Rooms: 112. Hotel Chain: Al Diar Hotels.

The Ramee Garden Hotel Apartments are centrally located in the heart of Abu Dhabi city, just a short distance away from the city's main commercial and business centres.

The Ramee Garden has 72 good-sized studios and apartments. Guests can choose from the open-plan studio accommodation with kitchenette, or the larger apartments with separate bedroom, living room and fully-equipped kitchen.

The Ramee Garden Hotel Apartments are situated only a 5-minute drive from the city's famous Corniche, the Gold Souq and the Al Wahda Shopping Mall. The Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre is 15-minutes away.

Hotel Rooms: 72. Hotel Chain: Ramee Group.

On Thursday 4th March when I reached Abu Dhabi there was nobody at the airport waiting for me. I sat at the entrance of the airport waiting for somebody to arrive. Since I do not carry a mobile phone I decided to wait until some body turned up. I began to write my travel notes for this book. Then Sajimon Nellissery came and smiled. He looked slightly different than what he was when I was in his house in 2005. I asked him whether he was Sajimon himself. After he said that he is the same person we started moving. He apologized for the delay. I told it was not his fault; the pilot speeded up the flight as the wind was in his favour and touched in Abu Dhabi airport about half an hour before the scheduled time.

Elections Bring Joy and Uncertainty

By Mohammed A. Salih

WASHINGTON, Mar 8, 2010 (IPS) - The holding of Iraq's third parliamentary elections on Sunday has generated a sense of satisfaction in Washington, but there is a feeling of anxiety about how the post-election negotiation process to form a new government might proceed.

Millions of Iraqis rushed to the polls amid major security challenges in parts of the country. Across Iraq, nearly 40 people were killed and dozens injured in insurgent attacks, with Baghdad having the highest number of casualties, according to Iraq's Interior Ministry.

"By any measure, this was an important milestone in Iraqi history...Today's voting makes it clear that the future of Iraq belongs to the people of Iraq," said U.S. President Barack Obama in a statement Sunday.

The president did not lose sight of the challenges that lay ahead. "We are mindful, however, that today's voting is the beginning and not the end of a long electoral and constitutional process... A parliament must be seated, leaders must be chosen, and a new government must be formed. All of these important steps will take time - not weeks, but months," Obama added.

The diverse electoral scene in Iraq witnessed over 300 political entities that included more than 6,000 candidates competing for the 325 seats of Iraq's Council of Representatives, or the parliament.

Many see the formation of the government as a major challenge ahead given that no single political group is expected to gain sufficient votes to be able to form the cabinet.

In 2005, it took around five months for Iraqi factions to establish a new government.

It is almost certain that one of the country's three major coalitions will be tasked with forming the future government. One coalition is the State of Law, led by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, which is mostly made up of Shia groups and personalities but also has non-Shia elements within it.

Another major group is al-Iraqiya, a cross-sectarian coalition headed by former secular Shia Prime Minister Ayad Allawi. Al-Iraqiya includes powerful Sunni groups and figures such as Vice-President Tariq al-Hashemi.

The third group is the Iraqi National Alliance (INA), a combination of mostly religious groups whose influential figures are Ammar al-Hakim, Muqtada Sadr, Ahmed Chalabi and former prime minister Ibrahim al-Jafari. Al-Hakim leads the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, which was the most powerful Shia political party until last year's provincial elections.

The Iraqi and Arab press is full of contradictory reports regarding unofficial results. Most put Maliki's State of Law at the top of the race and others mostly cite to Allawi's al-Iraqiya as the second main collector of votes.

However, none of these reports are verifiable or publicly sanctioned by election officials. A member of Iraq's High Electoral Commission's top board has told the Kurdish Sbeiy news website that the preliminary results of the elections will be announced by the end of the week.

Given the hostilities among various groups to varying degrees, it is not clear which groups might enter into larger partnerships with one another to create the government. It is expected that the two major Shia coalitions of the State of Law and INA may be more susceptible to forging a broader partnership to form the government, given that they are both made up of mostly Shia forces and many of them are religious parties.

Iran could also play a role in bringing the two groups together as it had reportedly tried and failed to do before the elections.

However, a coalition between Maliki and Allawi is seen as rather unlikely given the differences in attitude and make-up between the two groups.

Al-Iraqiya favours a pro-Arab world foreign policy in the region, while Maliki and Shias generally lean more toward Iran and do not have warm relations with some key Sunni Arab states, especially Saudi Arabia.

Allawi's list has a heavy Sunni presence in it, many of whom still perceive Maliki and Shia religious parties in general as sectarian. The Saddam Hussein regime's top echelons of power were filled by Sunni Arabs, many of whom were from his hometown of Tikrit.

"Al-Maliki's State of Law list campaigned hard against the resurgence of Baathism, and Allawi and many on his list are ex-Baathists, so al-Maliki would have to eat a lot of crow to accept a junior position in an Allawi government. It seems unlikely, even if politics makes for strange bedfellows," wrote Juan Cole, a Middle East and Iraq analyst, on his www.juancole.com blog.

With a prolonged and intense negotiation process expected in Iraq, the major fear is it might lead to security and political vacuums that could bring an increased measure of instability to the country. In 2006, while Iraqi political parties were still wrangling over the make-up of the new government, insurgents blew up the al-Askari mosque in Samarra, the site of two holy shrines of Shia Islam.

That touched off a period of bloody sectarian conflict between Shias and Sunnis that deeply destabilized the country and led to thousands of casualties on both sides. Al Qaeda was blamed for the attack.

While preparing to pull out its troops, the U.S. is particularly concerned about any major deterioration of the security situation in Iraq during the negotiation process. It hopes to withdraw all of its combat troops from Iraq by the end of August 2010.

Senior administration officials have touted Obama's handling of Iraq as a success and are keen to see troop withdrawal going according to the timetable.

Despite fears about the potentially destabilizing consequences of lengthy talks, some say Iraqis may have learned from the past and will be quicker this time.

"Everybody has been predicting that the post-election coalition maneuvering will be long and painful," said Marc Lynch, a Middle East expert, on his Abu Aardvark's Middle East Blog on Foreign Policy magazine's website.

"I suspect that this is wrong. Iraqis learned from that experience, and they've been spending the last half-year gaming out coalition scenarios," he said.

Although Iraqis living in U.A.E., U.S.A. etc can vote in the Iraqi elections, the Indians living abroad cannot vote in the elections in India. In this connection I wish to reproduce the news that appeared in the New Indian Express regarding the reasons in denying the rights of the Non-Resident Indians to exercise their right to vote in a foreign country.

There is no question of postal ballots because bogus voting will be a concern. So, they have to be physically present in the country to be able to vote

— VAYALAR RAVI

NRIs can vote only if present in India, says Vayalar Ravi

New Delhi, June 14

THE NRI voting rights Bill was likely to be passed in the monsoon session of Parliament, but there's no possibility of postal ballots for Non-Resident Indians (NRI), said Overseas Indian Affairs Minister Vayalar Ravi.

"There is no question of postal ballots because bogus voting will be a concern. So, they have to be physically present in the country to be able to vote," Ravi said.

"It will be passed in the next session of Parliament," he said.

A meeting of a Group of Ministers (GoM), constituted by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was held held June 10. It was chaired by A K Antony. Also present were Ravi, Home Minister P Chidambaram, Law Minister Veerappa Moily and HRD Minister Kapil Sibal.

"The demand for voting rights for people who live abroad - especially in the Gulf, the numbers into millions, so naturally it's a genuine demand - was difficult to meet as names get deleted from the voters list if they are absent in the country for more than six months," Ravi said.

"But when I became a Minister, the demand grew stronger, most of them in the Gulf being Malayalis; and because I speak the same language, they wanted me to take up the issue."

However, Ravi said the voting rights for the NRIs while residing in other countries can be considered only after the introduction of the electronic voting system in the country.

He said, "There is a proposal for electronic voting in India, but not now. When we have that we can look into voting from their respective places of residence."

Citing other efforts made by his Ministry, he said welfare funds for people returning to India and their rehabilitation was an ambitious and top priority project. Ravi hopes for a 'revolutionary change' in the increasing trend of illegal migration from India after the new Emigration Management Bill is passed.

He said, "It has gone to the secretaries committee. Once it comes through it will make a revolutionary change. It will be more beneficial to the people who want to go abroad" • IANS

INDIANS IN UAE PRISONS TO GET SUPPORT FOR PAYING BLOOD MONEY

Dubai, June 21

INDIAN citizens languishing in UAE prisons, due to their inability to pay blood money in non-criminal cases, will soon be assisted by a fund established by fellow Indian expatriates. Indian Business and Professional Council, Sharjah and Indian Golfers Society, UAE raised a sum of 5,00,000 dirhams at a golf tournament dinner to create a fund on Saturday.

"We are doing this to help our fellow Indians as part of our social responsibility," chairman of both the organisations, Sudesh Aggarwal said in a statement.

Blood money is the compensation paid by an offender to the relatives of the victim

Under the Shariah law, blood money is the compensation amount paid by an offender to the relatives of the victim. It is paid not only for murder but also in case the responsibility of an unnatural death, like an accident, falls on a person.

"Lot of funds are needed for the cause and the IGS and IBPC-Sharjah shall continue this drive and write to the companies in the UAE to contribute towards the fund, as part of their corporate social responsibility," Aggarwal said. PTI

In USA there is difference in the time. Chicago is 11 and half hours behind India. But New York is 10 and half hours behind India. In summer or winter the difference is reduced to 9 and half hours. The difference between India and California is 12 and half hours. We have to be careful when we telephone to somebody in the evening from New York to Chicago or California.

The longest day is in June 21 in India. The daylight is for 14 hours. 5.24 a.m. to 7.22 p.m. in New Delhi. On that day when we have the longest day in northern hemisphere it is the longest night in the southern hemisphere. **The New Indian Express,** Cochin dated June 21, 2010 has the following news about the longest Day of the year 2010.

"Solstice, a term derived from Latin words *'sol'* meaning 'sun' and *'sistere'* which means 'to stand still' is an astronomical event which occurs twice a year, when the tilt of the earth's axis is most inclined towards or away from the sun;" SPACE president C B Devgun said.

> "This causes the sun's apparent position in the sky to reach its northernmost or southernmost extreme, so the northern hemisphere points directly towards the sun while the southern hemisphere points directly opposite the sun," he said.
>
> "The solstice occurs in the northern hemisphere on June 21 at 4.58 p.m.," the SPACE president said

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ East India Company

Moment of Pride for every Indian !!

Sanjiv Mehta, CEO of The East India Company

Chicago via Abu Dhabi

With just around a month to go for the re-launch of the East India Company - the world's first multinational whose forces once ruled much of the globe - its new Indian owner says he is overwhelmed by "a huge feeling of redemption".

It's been a long, emotional and personal journey for Sanjiv Mehta, a Mumbai-born entrepreneur who completed the process of buying the East India Company (EIC) in 2005 from the "30 or 40" people who owned it.

Acutely aware that he owned a piece of history - at its height the company generated half of world trade and employed a third of the British workforce - Mehta, now the sole owner, dived into the company's rich and ruthless past in order to give it a new direction for the future.

With a $15-million investment and inputs from a range of experts - from designers and brand researchers to historians - Mehta is today poised to open the first East India Company store in London's upmarket Mayfair neighbourhood in March.

And then there is the inevitable - and daunting - task of launching in India, a country whose resources, army, trade and politics the company had controlled for some 200 years.

It's a task that Mehta has not taken lightly, he told reporter in an interview. "Put yourself in my shoes for a moment: On a rational plane, when I bought the company I saw gold at the end of the rainbow."

But, at an emotional level as an Indian, when you think with your heart as I do, I had this huge feeling of redemption - this indescribable feeling of owning a company that once owned us."

The formal start of the East India Company is usually dated back to 1600 when Britain's Queen Elizabeth I granted a group of merchants a charter under the name 'The Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East Indies.'

With its own Elizabethan coat of arms - now owned by Mehta - the company was made responsible for bringing tea, coffee and luxury goods to the West and trading in spices across the globe.

By 1757 the company had become a powerful arm of British imperial might, with its own army, navy, shipping fleets and currency, and control over key trading posts in India - where it was known variously as Company Bahadur and John Company. In 1874, the British government nationalised the company, opportunistically blaming the 1857 uprising on its excesses. But the East India Company army, brought under the command of the Crown, retained its all-powerful presence in India."

When I took over the company, my objective was to understand its history. I took a sabbatical from all other business and this became the single purpose in my life," said Mehta.

He travelled around the world, visiting former EIC trading posts and museums, reading up records and meeting people "who understood the business of that time".

"There was a huge sense of responsibility - I didn't create this brand, but I wanted to be as pioneering as the merchants who created it."

"The Elizabethan coat of arms stands for trust and reassurance, but we are not repeating history. It took me four years to do the brand positioning and put up the milestones."

The 'relaunched' company, with its headquarters on Conduit Street in Mayfair, is set to open a diverse line of high-end, luxury goods in London in March and in India some time this year.

EIC products in India will include fine foods, furniture, real estate, health and hospitality."

India is the spirit of the East India Company in many ways - it evokes a huge amount of connectivity and emotions," Mehta said. "It's also a major ambition to bring Indian products to the rest of the world. Today there is no single brand name from the East that can stand alongside, say, Hermes or Cartier from the West."

The East India Company has that ability."

The Assyrians in UAE were expecting greater participation in the administration of the Kurdistan region of Iraq. The following news item gives them more hope. One of the ministers in the Kurdistan region Mr.Nimrud Baito Youkhanna is the brother of Archdeacon Emmanuel Youkhanna living in Germany and helping many Assyrian refugees in Kurdistan, Syria, Lebanon etc..

Nimrud Baitu Youkhana urges all Iraq to emulate religious protections of the KRG

Washington, US (KRG.org)

Mr Nimrud Baito Youkhana, the Minister for Tourism in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and Secretary-General of the Assyrian Patriotic Party, talked of significant progress in ensuring religious freedom in the Kurdistan Region in Iraq.

During key meetings with Members of Congress, the Obama administration, and representatives of leading NGOs and the religious freedom community in the US, Minister Youkhana detailed how since the fall of Hussein, extremist groups targeted Christians and bombed their villages and churches, including his home town. This terrorism forced tens of thousands of Iraqis Christians to move to the Kurdistan Region where they were warmly welcomed and assisted.

The Minister commended highly language in the proposed Kurdistan constitution that affirms the rights of the Christian community in Iraq to have an autonomous administrative area in places where they are the majority.

"The progress the KRG has made in protecting religious opportunity and encouraging free and unfettered religious practice

was warmly received by all of those I had the honour of meeting," Minister Youkhana said. "We have reason to be proud and I was determined to make it clear that the KRG has been untiring in its efforts to ensure all religions in the Region are safe and strong. It is my wish that such progressive tolerance expands throughout Iraq."

Mr Qubad Talabani, the KRG's Representative to the US, hailed the Minister's visit as an important reminder to all of the diversity of the Kurdistan Region and its commitment to human rights and freedoms.

"Minister Youkhana's firm and clear words testifying to the KRG role in protecting and supporting Christianity throughout Iraq are crucial for our American friends to hear so as to better understand our determination in guaranteeing religious freedom within Iraqi Kurdistan," Talabani said. "Although he is a high-ranking minister in the KRG, Minister Youkhana nevertheless speaks his own mind for his region, his political party and his religion."

After departing Washington, the Minister continued his mission to cities throughout the US for meetings with the Assyrian-Chaldean-Syriac communities.

The latest news, after the complicated process of counting the ballots polled in Iraq and abroad and the failure of any single party getting absolute majority, seen in the internet by the end of July 2010 is reproduced below.

> "Please pray for the Assyrian Christians of Iraq.
>
> Please pray in particular for the nearly 500,000 refugees in neighboring countries and within Iraq as we work to provide them with assistance, help to go home and protection.

> Please pray for Prime Minister Elect Ayad Allawi, President Jalal Talabani, Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari, US Ambassador Chris Hill and others in authority for wisdom and favor for the Assyrian Christians of Iraq."

Who knows when will the Assyrians in Iraq get the security in the land of their ancestors?

The Assyrians are found not only in Iraq, but also in Iran.

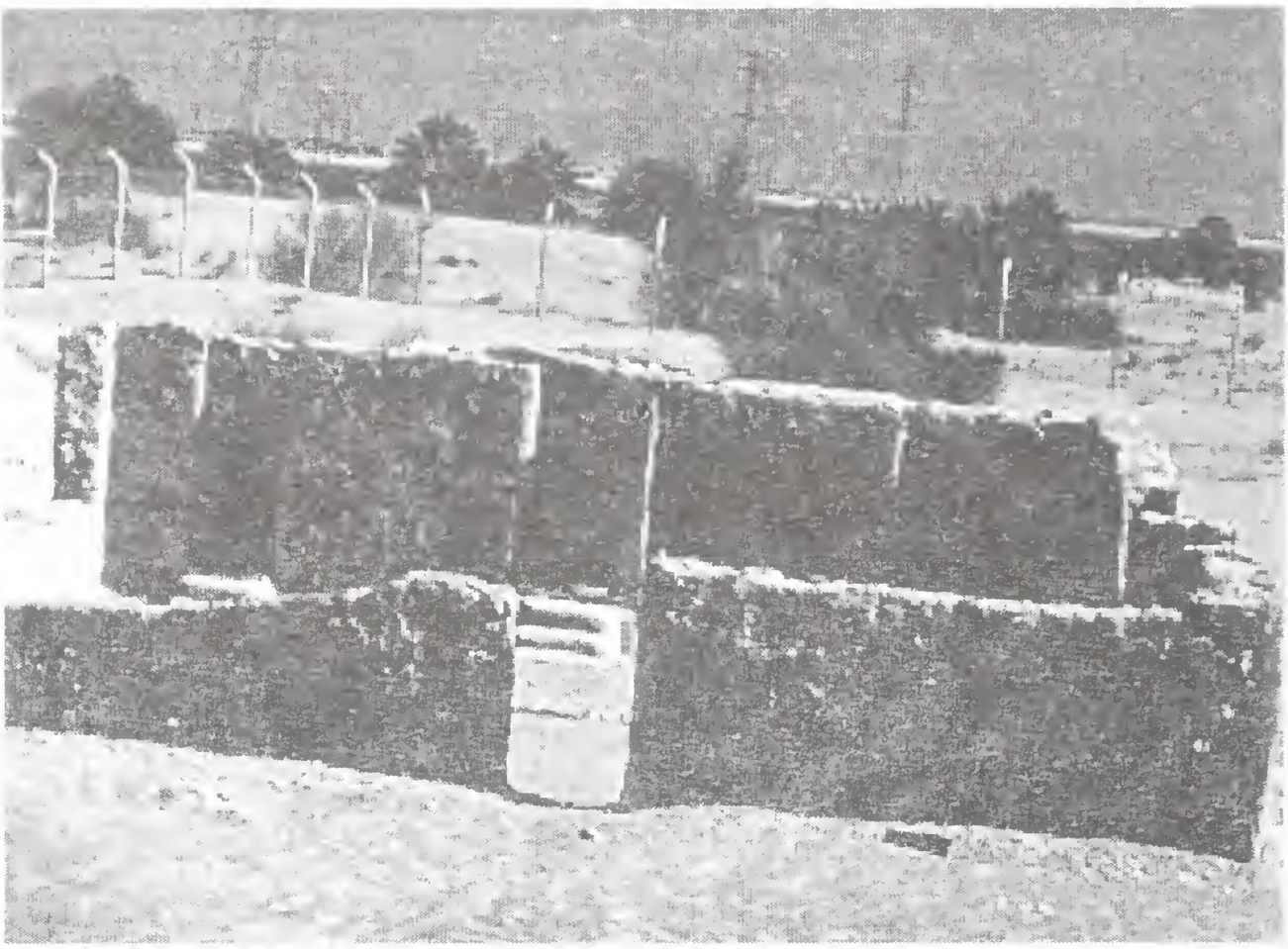
Their ancient churches are found in and around Urmia region. I had visited most of the Assyrian churches in and around Urumia in March 1988. Almond and raisin is the commodity for Assyrians that did come from Uremia and arzibnanoh. Walnuts pistachio also are one of the best in the world that is from Iran.

The Eastern Province

(Saudi Arabia)

Bordering the Arabian Gulf and containing the towns of Dhahran, Al-Khobar, Dammam, Qatif, Hofuf and Jubail, the Eastern Province is where **oil was first discovered in Saudi Arabia in the 1930s.** Near Jubail are the ruins of what was unearthed in the **mid-1980s** by a group of people attempting to dig their vehicle out of the sand. The ruins are known as the **Jubail Church** and are acknowledged by the Saudi bureaucracy who **will not issue permits to visit it** because "the site is being excavated."
In any case, the ruins originally contained **four stone crosses**, which later went **missing**, though the marks where the crosses were are still visible. The ruins are thought to date from the **4th century**, which make them **older than any known church in Europe**. Not much else is known but speculation is that it was in some way connected to one of the five Nestorian bishoprics which are known to have existed in this area of the Gulf in the 4th century.

Color image of the Nestorian Church at Al-Jubail in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. The photographs were taken during 1986 shortly after the ruins were partially excavated and protected by the Saudi Department of Antiquities.



Entrance to the Nestorian church. Photograph by Robert and Patricia McWhorter.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Mar Aprem
Metropolitan

George was the 4th of the ten children of Devassy and Kochu mariyam of the Mooken family. He was active in the church since his Sunday school days. There were no priests in the families of his parents. Still he wanted to be a priest.

After studying at Bethel Nursery School in Mission Quarters he joined the CMS Boys Parish School and moved to the Chaldean Syrian School in 1949. After passing High School examination he joined the St. Thomas College, Trichur in 1955. He was in the final batch of the Intermediate Course of the Madras University in the St. Thomas College.

In 1957 after passing his intermediate examination he joined the Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur, and Madhya Pradesh. He excelled as debater and won Chief Minister Memorial Trophy of the state of Madhya Pradesh. When he was only 21 years old, immediately after four years of his B.D. course of the Serampore University at Jabalpur, he went to St. Boniface College, Warminster, England on a scholarship of the World Council of Churches. After his one year of postgraduate studies in England at St. Boniface College, Warminster (4th year course of the King's College, London University) he had short courses at St. Augustine's College, Canterbury as well as the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Switzerland in 1962.

He holds two master's degrees in Church History, one from the United Theological College, Bangalore (**M.Th**. of Serampore, 1966), and the other from the Union Theological Seminary, New York (**S.T.M.** degree in 1967). He was a candidate for Doctor of

Theology (**Th.D**.) degree at Princeton Theological Seminary, USA. when he was made bishop and eight days later as Metropolitan at Baghdad, Iraq in September 1968. In 1976 he earned his **D.Th.** degree from Serampore University near Calcutta.

He was an active participant and supporter in most of the conferences and symposia held at SEERI (St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute) Kottayam. He has encouraged scholars abroad to co-operate with SEERI. He sent three students from his Church to study at SEERI for M.A. and two for Ph.D. degree courses and several others to do the certificate course. He has helped to project the ecumenical vision of the SEERI.

Mar Aprem has a collection of the rare Syriac Manuscripts in the Eastern Syriac. He took active part in encouraging ecumenical attempts for the preservation of these manuscripts in co-operation with SEERI. In 1995, Mahatma Gandhi University in Kottayam recognized SEERI as the Centre for the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Syriac language and Literature.

Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan registered for Ph.D. After 5 years of extensive research traveling and reading in **Lambeth** Palace Library, London, British Library, London, Oriental Institute, Rome, and the Harvard University, USA he submitted his **Ph.D**. dissertation in October 2000. In May 2002 he successfully defended his thesis. In October 2002 the Syndicate of the Mahatma Gandhi University decided to award **Ph.D**. degree to Mar Aprem.

Mar Aprem was given the Medal of Merit of the Coptic Orthodox Cultural Centre, Venice for his cultural and ecumenical experience. He was the recipient of the Literary Award of the Rotary Club of Thrissur in 1990. The first prize in the writing competition of the New Delhi based publishing House ISPCK went to him. They published that essay under the title **Adoption Abroad** (ISBN-81-7214-010-x) in 1991. He received **World Wide Award** of a local organization in Thrissur as well as the **William Carey**

Award of the *Kraisthava Sahithya* Academy. He was awarded the **Mary Paul Chammanam Award** by the Trichur Ecumenical Group for the best Ecumenical worker on 22nd December 2002.

He delivered the 10th **Annual Chaplaincy lecture** in the Loughborough University of Technology in England in May 1994. The University published his lecture. He has lectured and preached in many places all over the world. He is at home in small groups of scholars or ordinary people as well as in large gatherings.

Ordained a deacon on June 25, 1961 he became a priest on the day he completed twenty-five years of age on 13 June 1965. He was consecrated **Bishop** on September 21, 1968 by Mar Thoma Darmo at Mar Zaia Cathedral in Karradat Mariam in Baghdad and promoted as a **Metropolitan** eight days later in the same Cathedral.

Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan of the Chaldean Syrian Church of the East in India with headquarters in Thrissur was awarded the "**MEN OF ACHIEVEMENT**", Award of the International Biographical Centre, Cambridge, England in 1984. This award is given to selected men and women all over the world for their distinguished achievements.

Mar Aprem has written 70 books mostly in English and a few in Malayalam such as biographies, autobiography, travelogue, church history, etc. His books **Bishop's Jokes** and **Laugh With the Bishop** have already attracted world attention. He wrote five more books in the humor in series. **Laugh to Health, Holy Humour, Joy to the World, Holy Smile** and **NOT SO FUNNY**. ORBIS books in New York reprinted his book **Nestorian Missions**.

His first two humour books were translated into Russian language and released in Moscow in 1992. Some of his jokes were translated into Malayalam and published by Deepika Books,

Kottayam under the caption ***Vishudha Phalithangal. Vishudha*** means holy and ***Phalithangal*** means jokes. This book is out of print for many years. Doma Publications, Ernakulam brought out another book in 2002 captioned ***Aprem Phalithangal.***

His biography of **Mar Abimalek Timotheus** Metropolitan was translated in to the Assyrian language and published in Chicago. His books, **Council of Ephesus of 431 AD** and the **Nestorian Fathers** were translated into Arabic language and published in Iraq and Chicago. His books **Sermons From the Gospels Vol.1** and **Vol. 2** were translated into Assyrian and published in Canada. His biographies of his two predecessors, **Mar Abimalek Timotheus** and **Mar Thoma Darmo** were published in Thrissur in Malayalam translations.

The biographical details of Mar Aprem have been given in the **Men of Achievement**, Vol. 10, Cambridge, England in 1984. His biography appears in the **International Who's Who of Intellectuals, Vol. 6** Cambridge, 1985. The **International Directory of Distinguished Leadership,** First Edition, USA, 1986 also gives the biographical details of the Metropolitan. Similar details are found also in **Reference Asia Vol. 2** in 1986 and **Vol. 4** in 1989. **Biography International**, Delhi, 1993 also has details about him. The ***Akhila Vinjyana Kosham***, DC Books, Kottayam, 1989 and many reference books in Malayalam and English languages have published details about him.

He is also a writer of devotional songs broadcast over **All India Radio**. His song **Behold the Cross of Calvary** was published in 50 Indian and 50 foreign translations. Mar Aprem who has spoken in various platforms throughout India and abroad is a linguist. An Audio CD of his 16 selected songs in Malayalam was released in 2008.

He founded The Mar Timotheus Birth Centenary Technical Training Centre in Trichur in 1980, which imparts free training

in printing technology to students without any discrimination of caste or creed. This is funded from the World Council of Churches, Geneva through CASA, Delhi.

In June 1990 Dr. Mar Aprem read a paper in the one-man-symposium organized by the **Pro Oriente,** Vienna. The title of his paper was "**Was Nestorius a Nestorian?**" This was the first step to form a Syriac commission by the Pro Oriente, Vienna. He has been active in Pro Oriente since the Syriac Commission was formed in 1994. He has participated actively in its deliberations.

He was the co-Chairman of the ten-member Joint committee for Theological Dialogue between Vatican and the Assyrian Church, which meets once a year. This committee has made significant studies on the Liturgy of Mar Addai and Mar Mari as well as the Sacraments of the Assyrian Church of the East.

In 2008 he made two trips, the first was from Dubai to Duhok via California, Chicago, New York, Erbil, The second was to Sydney, Melbourne and Perth in Australia.

Since 1968 he is the head of the Church of the East in India with his headquarters in Thrissur. He was the President of the **Church History Association of India** during 1976 – 1982. He is a member of the National Board of **CASA** (Church's Auxiliary for Social Action) since its founding in 1976 in New Delhi. He is active in several religious and social organizations, all over India.

Mar Aprem wrote his 70th book in his 70th year. The P. Thomas Foundation in Trichur has announced the 2009 award of Rs.11,111 to Mar Aprem Metropolitan.

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6. With Mar Narsai of Kirkuk(old calendar) at the Funeral of Mar Narsai De Baz
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8. Funeral of Mar Narsai Moving to Montrose Cemetery
9. Mar Aprem, Mar Narsai (Old Calendar) and Mar Meelis at the Funeral of Mar Narsai
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11. Dr. Asha & Paul Furlow with children Sophie and William, Mrs. Maria Sanil Mooken and Mar Aprem in Chicago.
12. Coffin of Mar Narsai Metropolitan is being carried by the deacons to take it to the cemetery.

13. Mar Aprem celebrates in the new Church of St. Andrews in Chicago on February 21, 2010.

14. Sanil Mooken &wife Maria, Chiku & wife Smitha, and my niece Dr. Asha are seen standing. Chor bishop Dr. George Toma and Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan are seen in the middle. Photo taken after Holy Qurbana on 21 February 2010 in St. Andrews Church, Chicago

15. Relatives of Mar Aprem who attended Holy Qurbana in St. Andrews Church on 21st Feb. 2010. Left to Right: Mrs. Smitha Chacko, Dr. Asha Alex Furlow. Chicku, Mar Aprem. Mrs. Maria and Sanil Mooken

16. Fr.George Sulaiman, vicar of Mar Mari church, Yonkers, New York assists Mar Aprem at the baptism of Nikhil held by his grandparents Geevarghese Emmaty and his wife Thankamma. The parents of the child Munna & Reshma Emmatty, as well as uncle Dr.Patel of Boston look on.

17. Ivan Mirza, aged 79 meets Mar Aprem after Holy Qurbana in Mar Mari Church, Yonkers, New York on 28 Feb, 2010.

18. Indian members after Holy Qurbana in the Assyrian Church at Yonkers

19. Geevarghese Emmatty and wife with their son Munna With wife Reshma and two sons Senna and Nikhil.

20. Assyrian ladies after Holy Qurbana in New York.

21. John Thermadom and his wife Shanthamma with relatives at his house blessing in New York

22. Mar Aprem enjoying snow outside the house of John Thermadom.

23. Mar Aprem with Sajimon Nellisery, wife, son and daughter in Abu Dhabi on March 5.

24. After Holy Qurbana in Sharjah on Friday March 5, 2010. The new parish Trustees (Sunny Panakal and Anil S.Emmatty) take charge from the old Trustees (John Paul Emmatty and Zebulin Francy) in UAE Mart Mariam parish.

25. Mar Aprem celebrates Holy Qurbana in Emirates National School, Sharjah on Friday March 5, 2010 during the one day stop over in Abu Dhabi.Vicar Fr.Victor, Assistant Vicar Fr.Sachin, Fr.Simon Emmatty from Trichur assisted.

26. The Assyrians attending Holy Qurbana on March 5th at Sharjah. Left to Right: Lawyer Carmen, her brother, Aprim Shapira, Zia Marcus George, Mrs.Zaia, Mr Ward Zaia. (Ward Zaia's wife Rita and Mrs Immanuel were present, but not in this picture.)

27. Mr.E.I.Paul of Ernakulam, Mar Aprem and Chacko Konikara who were classmates in the High School graduating class 55 years ago in 1955.

28. At Abu Dhabi Linda with her husband Raju and two sons. Linda is the daughter of Music Director Jokin master, classmate of Mar Aprem in High School 55 years ago.

29. Pradeep Mooken, son of Mar Aprem's brother Prof. Andrews Mooken after Holy Qurbana in Sharjah on Friday March 5th, 2010.

Cover page 2

1. Photo of Beginning of Mar Mari Shleeha Church in Yonkers in January 1967 with Bishop Mar Dinkha of Iran and Fr.George Mooken (Now Mar Aprem).
2. Ground breaking ceremony of Mar Mari Shleeha Church in Yonkers, New York in January 1967 by Bishop Mar Dinkha.

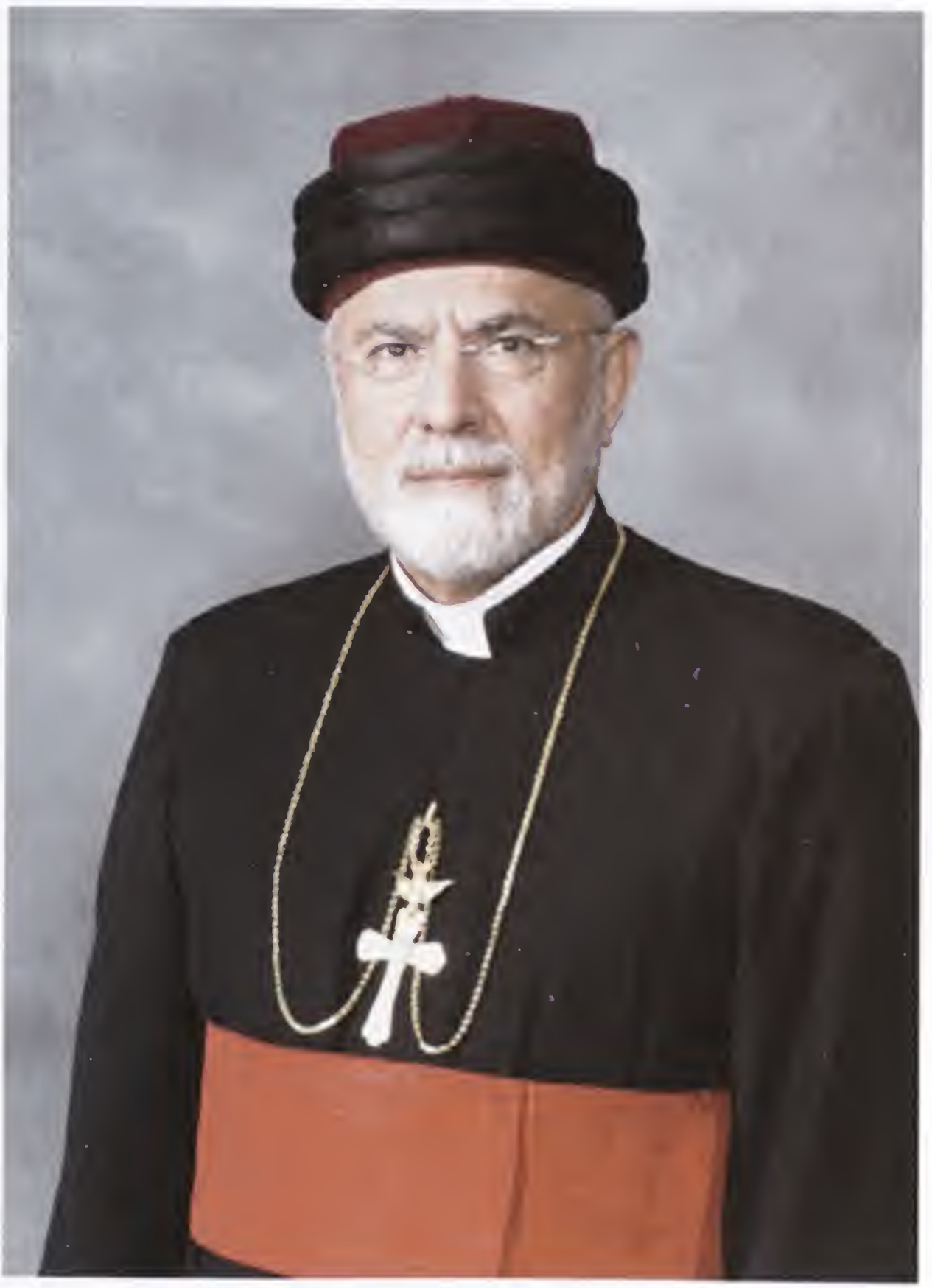
Cover Page 3

1. Padmashree Yusuf Ali M.A. speaks with H.H. Mar Dinkha IV.
2. Map of UAE with Sharjah marked.

Cover Page 4

Map of North Chicago with five churches and Patriarchal Residence marked.

PHOTOGRAPHS



Mar Narsai Metropolitan (1940 – 2010)

Memorial to Mar Narsai Metropolitan in Trichur. Mar Aprem offering flowers before the picture of Mar Narsai before departing to Chicago to attend the funeral. Two episcopas are also seen.

Mar Mari Church in Yonkers, New York.

Choir & Clergy at St.Andrews Church with Mar Aprem in February 2010.

Funeral of Mar Narsai lead by Patriarch, Mar Meelis & Mar Aprem

With Mar Narsai of Kirkuk(old calendar)
at the Funeral of Mar Narsai de Baz

Arch Deacon Aprem De Baz, elder brother of Mar Narsai, at Holy Qurbana before the Funeral of Mar Narsai.

Funeral procession of Mar Narsai
Moving to Montrose Cemetery

Mar Aprem, Mar Narsai (Old Calendar) and Mar Meelis
at the Funeral of Mar Narsai

St. George Cathedral, Chicago

Dr.Asha & Paul Furlow with children
Sophie and William

Coffin of Mar Narsai Metropolitan is being carried by the deacons to take it to the cemetery

Mar Aprem celebrates in the new Church of St. Andrews in Chicago on February 21, 2010.

Sanil Mooken & wife Maria, Chiku & wife Smitha, and my niece Dr. Asha are seen standing. Chor bishop Dr. George Toma and Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan are seen in the middle. Photo taken after Holy Qurbana on 21 February 2010 in St. Andrews Church, Chicago

Relatives of Mar Aprem who attended Holy Qurbana in St. Andrews Church on 21st Feb. 2010. Left to right: Mrs. Smitha Chacko, Dr. Asha Alex Furlow, Chicku, Mar Aprem, Mrs. Maria and Sanil Mooken.

Fr.George Sulaiman, vicar of Mar Mari church, Yonkers, New York assists Mar Aprem at the baptism of Nikhil held by his grandparents Geevarghese Emmaty and his wife Thankamma. The parents of the child Munna & Reshma Emmatty, as well as uncle Dr.Patel of Boston look on.

Ivan Mirza, aged 79 meets Mar Aprem after Holy Qurbana in Mar Mari Church, Yonkers, New York on 28 Feb, 2010.

Indian members after Holy Qurbana in the Assyrian Church at Yonkers

Geevarghese Emmatty and wife with their son Munna with wife Reshma and two sons Senna and Nikhil.

Assyrian ladies after Holy Qurbana in New York.

John Thermadom and his wife Shanthamma with relatives at his house blessing in New York

Mar Aprem enjoying snow outside the house of John Thermadom.

Mar Aprem with Sajimon Nellisery, wife (Rinni) son (Joseph) and daughter (Ashima) in Abu Dhabi on March 5.

After Holy Qurbana in Sharjah on Friday March 5, 2010. The new parish Trustees (Sunny Panakal and Anil S.Emmatty) take charge from the old Trustees (John Paul Emmatty and Zebulin Francy) in UAE Mart Mariam parish.

Mar Aprem celebrates Holy Qurbana in Emirates National School, Sharjah on Friday March 5, 2010 during the one day stop 0ver in Abu Dhabi.Vicar Fr. Victor, Assistant Vicar Fr. Sachin, Fr.Simon Emmatty from Trichur assisted.

The Assyrians attending Holy Qurbana on March 5th at Sharjah. Left to Right: Lawyer Carmen, her brother, Aprim Shapira, Zia Marcus George, Mrs.Zaia, Mr Ward Zaia. (Ward Zaia's wife Rita and Mrs Immanuel were present, but not in this picture.)

Mr.E.I.Paul of Ernakulam, Mar Aprem and Chacko Konikara who were classmates in the High School graduating class 55 years ago in 1955.

At Abu Dhabi Linda with her husband Raju and two sons Alan and Anly. Linda is the daughter of Jokin master, classmate of Mar Aprem in High School 55 years ago.

Pradeep Mooken, son of Ma Aprem's brother Prof. And rews Mooken after Hol Qurbana in Sharjah on Frida March 5th, 2010.

Padmashree Yusaf Ali M.A. speaks with Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV in Dubai in January 2010. Copied from Malayalanadu Newspaper.

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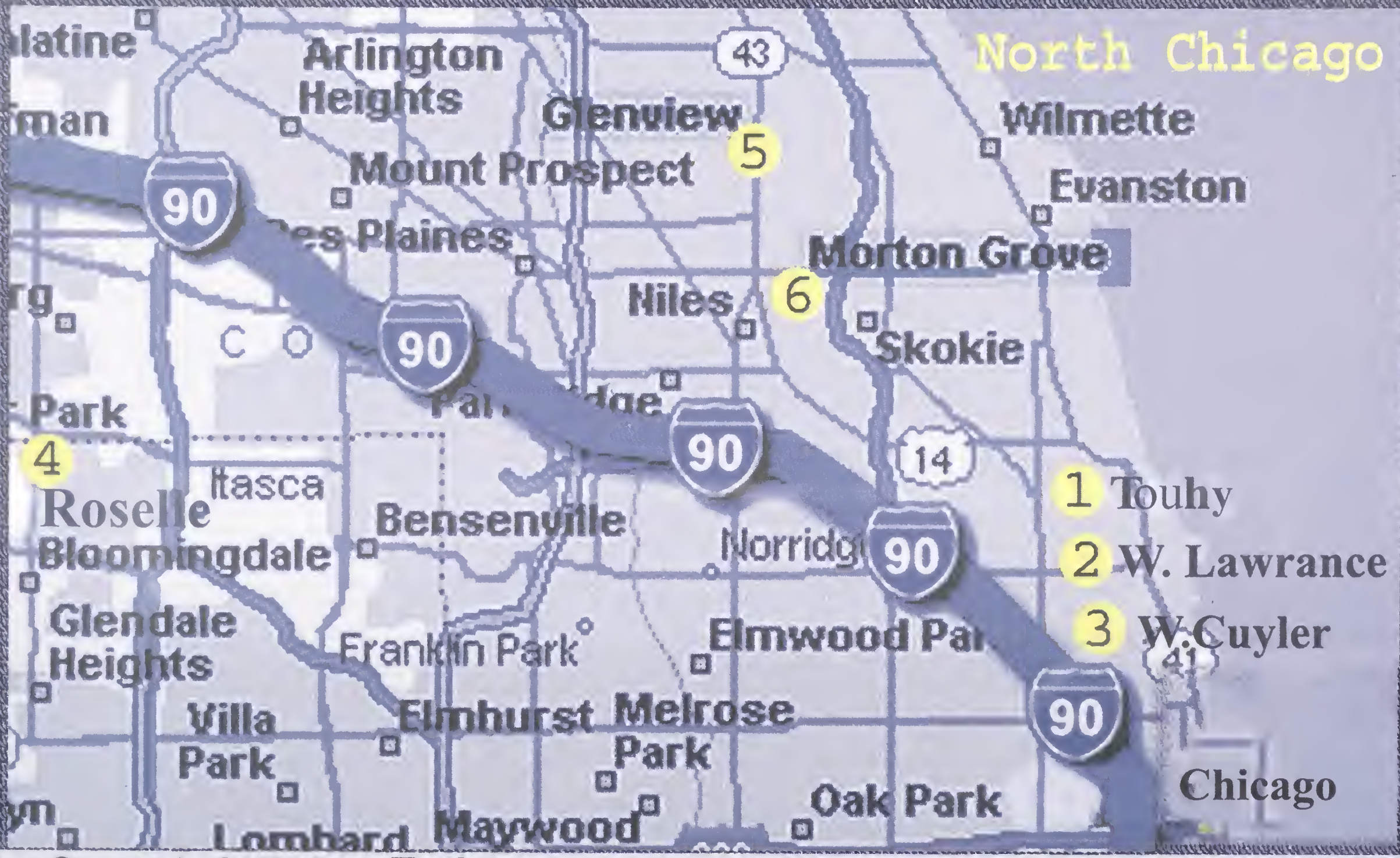

1. Mar Gewargis Cathedral, Touhy
2. St. John Assyrian Church, West Lawrance
3. Mar Sargis Church, West Cuyler
4. Mart Mariam Church, Rossella
5. St. Andrews Church, Glenview
6. Patriarchal Residence, Morton Grove